

GREEK CYPRIOT WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY CYPRUS  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE 1974 WAR AND ITS  
CONSEQUENCES

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Submitted for the degree of PhD in Education

University of London, Institute of Education

March 1985

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to develop an understanding of the position of women in Cypriot society. The empirical work concentrates on the life cycle of two groups of Greek Cypriot women, rural and urban respectively, and the experiences of those women whose husbands were killed or lost as a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

Societies produce certain forms of social control to maintain existing social relations. In times of crisis, when the very existence of the state itself is under threat, social regulation becomes more explicit; in particular areas it may be extended and its oppressive effects are exacerbated.

The thesis starts by looking at those women in Cyprus who were directly affected by the war and goes on to consider rural and urban women more generally in chapters 7 and 8. These two chapters contain extensive illustrations of the social, economic and political oppression of women and the way in which this is produced and reproduced through commonly held traditional sets of beliefs and established social practices, reinforced by the powerful institutions of Church and State. The discussion of the position of Greek Cypriot women is set in the wider context of Greek Cypriot history and the general socio-economic and political background of Cyprus. It is further informed



by an examination of Greek Cypriot family law, both common law and canon law, which analyses the specific ways in which it operates to women's disadvantage.

The last chapter presents an overview of the historical and contemporary positions of Greek Cypriot women in the light of the ethnographic research, examines conditions for maintenance and potential change of positions and offers suggestions for future research. Finally the thesis addresses the following questions: What has feminism to offer Greek Cypriot women ? What new insights has the case of Greek Cypriot women to offer to the general arguments of feminism?

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was completed over the period from October 1978 to March 1985 and was the product of my personal awareness of the position of women in Cyprus, as well as the experience of the war of 1974 and its immediate aftermath.

I would like to thank my relatives in London, especially Ellie Karakoviri and Kostas Sofokleous who financed my studies while I was unemployed and made it possible for me to submit my proposal for research, the outcome of which is presented here. Both have gone out of their way to support me financially and emotionally, offering shelter and food and loving care during the most difficult years of my studies.

I should also like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Diana Leonard, Dr. Philip Corrigan and Professor Basil Bernstein, who have helped me enormously. Dr. Corrigan undertook the role of my supervisor when Dr. Leonard was working for the Open University, and he has commented in detail and with admirable patience on my first and subsequent drafts. Dr. Leonard very kindly took me on as soon as her official duties with the Open University ended, though she had not yet returned officially to her previous post. Finally, I am particularly indebted to Professor Bernstein, who commented extensively on the final draft of the thesis and whose support was invaluable at a time when I had begun to despair of

completing the work. -5-

My sincere thanks go to the Cypriot women's group and the Feminist Methodology Group, both of which offered vital and continuous support, combining academic discussion with positive criticism whenever my work was presented to them at the various stages of its development.

In Cyprus I was given special support and encouragement by a number of people involved in discussions about Cypriot society. Since I cannot name them all, I would like to thank them collectively.

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PROLEGOMENA

Before turning to the main body of my study, I want to illustrate the problem in two different ways: firstly by means of a painting by the Cypriot artist A.Diamantis which is famous on the island. It is a major, large scale work, that took five years to complete (1967-1972), and depicts the "World of Cyprus" that was beginning to disappear in the 1960s. Secondly by a number of extracts from a work of literature written by a young Cypriot woman in 1980-81, during and just after the period of my fieldwork, which demonstrates that "the cup has flowed over" (1).

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*Ἑγκάρδιες Χριστουγεννιάτικες  
καὶ*

*Πρωτοχρονιάτικες Εὐχὲς*

萬	<i>Season's Greetings</i>
賀	<i>Meilleurs Vœux</i>
新	<i>Felices Fiestas</i>
禧	<i>C HOBBIM TOAOM</i>
禧	<i>Frohe Festtage</i>







The fact that in this huge mural, women are invisible is significant, in that it accurately reflects the society that the artist is portraying. Do we regret the disappearance of this world? Can it be replaced by a world in which there is more sharing, more equality between people? Can the passive mother figures and the innocent young girls of the painting be replaced by women who are active participants in the public life of Cyprus, involved in the decision making processes that affect the affairs of the island?

Δε φοβάμαι. Ούτε και περιμένω.

Είμαι ήρεμη και γεμάτη αγωνία.

Δε παίρνω τίποτα. Δίνω όπως τα θηρία παίρνουν.

Πρέπει να γράψω ένα βιβλίο για να υπάρξω.

Η στιγμή και η θέση της Κύπρου σήμερα

είναι τέτοια που είμαι καταδικασμένη από την

ιστορία της, η ιστορία μου στην σιωπή, στην

απομόνωση.

I am not afraid. Nor do I expect anything.

I am calm and full of agony.

I take nothing. I give as the wild beasts take.

I have to write a book in order to exist.

The history of Cyprus is such at this moment

that I am condemned by its history, my history,

to silence, to isolation.

(E.Rebelina 1981:51)

## OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

### PART I: THE PROBLEM ILLUSTRATED

The study begins with a section devoted to the women who participated in this research. They describe the realities of their lives in their own words. Some of the wives of missing persons speak about the continuous stress they are under and express their feelings towards other people around them who have, or had, a special relationship with them. Part I of this thesis includes a rich description and illustrative examples of the experiences of a considerable number of contemporary Greek Cypriot women. By describing the 1974 war, and its immediate after-effects on the lives of the women studied, I attempt first to present the political and historical context, and then the position of the women within it.

### PART II: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF THE PROBLEM

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 contain the general historical and theoretical material relating to the Church and the State - two institutions that play an important role in contemporary Greek Cypriot women's lives - and their interrelationship in the context of Cypriot political and social affairs. The legal status of Greek Cypriot women is also discussed here, especially the relationship between religious and secular laws governing the family and social policies. Institutional support offered to the discriminating ideologies about women is seen as a crucial factor preventing change.

### PART III: WOMEN IN CYPRUS, 1974-1980

Part III relates back to Part I, and contains the data gathered during the fieldwork. Chapter 5 presents a statistical picture of the Greek Cypriot population in general, and of women in particular, concentrating on demography, employment, education, political involvement and social policies. Chapter 6 describes the research sample, with statistical tables, and gives a historical account of the research. Chapter 7 consists of the analysis of the data gathered in the rural setting, 'Horio', and chapter eight the analysis of the data from the fieldwork carried out in an urban setting, 'Poli'. Chapter 9 is a discussion of the special situation in which unprotected women in general find themselves in Cyprus, be they war widows, wives of missing persons, divorced, or simply unmarried women.

### PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

Part IV offers an annotated description of political and social events since 1980 and attempts in the conclusion (chapter 10) to bring together all the threads of the thesis. It also discusses the research that needs to be done and the importance of the ideological climate surrounding the issues of women and social and political changes in the Third World.

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\*References and notes for each chapter will be found at the end of the chapter.

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PART I: THE PROBLEM ILLUSTRATED

SUMMARY

As my title suggests, the purpose of the first part of my thesis is primarily illustrative. It describes the harrowing experiences of so many contemporary Greek Cypriot women that constitute my research materials. I believe it is important for the reader to have a vivid picture of these experiences in mind to inform her or his understanding of the historical and theoretical material presented in Part II.

Chapter 1, therefore, introduces the problem through an extended case study. A 35 year old wife of a missing person, and a mother of two boys, speaks of the many sufferings she has experienced in her life: born to a poor peasant family of seven girls, married without a dowry and struggling to build up a home, she lost her husband, home and village and was reduced to the status of a refugee and a single mother overnight because of the war. A few general and specific points of special importance to the main interests of this research are drawn together from this interview. Further examples are then given to reinforce the description of suffering experienced by this group of women from the beginning of the war to the present day.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Greek Cypriot Women in Contemporary Cyprus
2. Methodological Considerations
3. Resources Used

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Greek Cypriot Women in Contemporary Cyprus

Until recently social anthropology has for the most part answered questions concerning the status of women in a descriptive, functional way, without touching at all on the origins of and reasons for the position of women in social, family or professional life, or on their relations to the state and the law.

Until about 1970, for example, most of the work on African women had been done by anthropologists concerned with kinship, marriage, inheritance and modes of production, whose studies were insufficiently policy-oriented and, more importantly, lacked an analytic focus (Tadessee in Rendel 1980:14). This approach produces static models of traditional societies and creates over-simplified dichotomies.

History in general has only recently come to focus on the role of women within society. In the case of countries having to deal with foreign occupation, anticolonial struggles for independence, and intercommunal conflicts, it is these that problems have been, and still are, the main focus of historical writing. There has been no room to mention, much less consider, the existence of women and the specific nature of their problems.

The assertion that 'personal is political' embodies the

important principle that private life, the terrain of the home, the family and personal relationships should be brought into public view and deserve serious analysis. This slogan has been central to feminist theory, since the private domain is the world to which women have been largely restricted, and almost exclusively the world in which they have been constructed by patriarchal societies. Unless we can understand the mutually constitutive relationship between the processes of this world and the public arena of culture, economics and politics, we will have no means of understanding the inevitable changes in the position of women that are taking place in many societies.

This study seeks to understand the position of women in Greek Cypriot society, and their relationship to the rapid modernisation of that society and an expansionist war. At a second level it lends support to the notion that unless the status of women is recognised as a significant dimension in the processes of social change, then any reconstruction after crisis will conceal within it the reproduction of the disadvantaged position of women and will frequently perpetuate and compound it.

My study is concerned specifically with Greek Cypriot women and it is important that my reasons for excluding the other women of Cyprus should be clear from the beginning. Much as I would like to have included Turkish Cypriot women and the women of other smaller minorities,



it was impossible for me, as a Greek Cypriot, to gain access to the Turkish controlled part of the island in order to observe and interview Turkish Cypriot women. As will become clear later in this introduction, my methodological approach was such that anything less than prolonged, extensive and informal access to the women who are my subjects would have rendered my research invalid. It is my belief, however, that a similar study of Cypriot society as a whole could profitably be carried out despite the practical difficulties involved and that it would help to produce understanding and cooperation since, in the present circumstances, it would have to be a joint venture. Many of the characteristics of family life that originate in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures are common to both the Turkish and the Greek Cypriot communities and these shared features bring them close together, in spite of the divisions created by ethnicity, nationalism and religion.

One permanent difference between Greek and Turkish women, remarked by Sarah Ladbury (1979), is that the family life and sexual relationships of the latter are regulated by secular, not religious law. The position of Greek Cypriot women is determined to a great extent by the Greek Orthodox Religion, which permeates Greek Cypriot society at every level of public and private life. This work will examine the degree to which religious and political institutions reinforce each other in a relationship that gives Orthodoxy an even

more pervasive influence. This factor is particularly significant in the area of policy relating to sexual relations and family life, and is directly responsible for the lack of a properly developed welfare state.

I started my investigation with the women who are known in Cyprus as 'false widows' (pseftohires) - the wives of missing persons (WMPns). It was the intensity of their pain, coupled with my inability to help them resolve their problems, that gave me the impetus for the research presented here. When I reflected on the position of these women, I began to realise the extent to which Greek Cypriot women are conditioned to depend on 'male protection', and how bereft these particular women were when the war removed their means of support.

My immediate concern was aroused as a result of extensive contact with refugee women who were the mothers of pupils at the schools in which I worked from September 1974, immediately after the war, until October 1977. It was during this period of crisis that I realised that almost all Greek Cypriot women, married or single, working class or middle class, rural or urban, workers, professionals or housewives, face continuous problems stemming from the traditional view of their position within the family and society, which is at once produced by and productive of the institutions which administer and regulate these. The refugee women of all socio-economic backgrounds have faced additional problems because of the situation created by the 1974

war, which led to the loss not only of their possessions, but also of their homes, and even of the part of the country to which they 'belonged'. In particular, the women who found themselves without a male 'protector', whether husband, father or brother, and who became perforce heads of households were put in an untenable position by the intense pressure of the traditional values and the concomitant social and legislative practices of Cypriot society. The fact written that women are usually seen as dependent exacerbates their problems when they are suddenly put in the position of having to support themselves and their own dependents; moreover, since they suffer in silence, their situation goes unrecognised and is therefore perpetuated.

The position of women in Cypriot society is reflected in The Greek Gift by Peter Loizos, an account of a Greek Cypriot village in which the woman's point of view scarcely appears. This is not to suggest that his account is invalid - merely to stress that different people see different things. Loizos himself confessed a few years later that in The Greek Gift the women of the village he studied were almost invisible, and completely unheard, though he had the opportunity to talk to some of his kinswomen and could probably have interviewed them.

The explanation for this omission, is, of course, one of 'male bias' - not mine alone, but also that of the men of Argaki who made it clear to me that

the kind of kinsman they wanted was the kind who spent his time with other men. (Loizos 1981:194)

In his work on Nicosia, Attalides (1981) studied households and interviewed only men, for which he gives his own reasons (1).

It seems logical to me to accept that women have different life experiences in different areas and that this gives rise to differing interpretations, all of which are equally valid. The willingness to accept interpretations other than one's own should be regarded as a characteristic of the sociologist's mind and analysis. Male sociologists and social anthropologists tend to label as scientific and objective only what has been named and described by other scholars, who are usually men. New meanings and explanations offered by people, usually women, who have lived on the periphery of the academic world have until recently been characterised as 'personal', 'political', or 'journalistic', and definitely 'not scientific'. One could go so far as to say that the sex of the researcher is of fundamental importance in sociology.

It is valid to claim that male experience has passed until very recently for human experience. After great effort women in the world achieved some degree of awareness of the oppression they were suffering. When they communicated their experiences they realised that the oppression took different forms according to the

class position of their males, but they found that basically they were in a disadvantaged position in comparison with men, both inside and outside marriage. Worst of all, women discovered that researchers made no attempt to study their real life situations. Women have been referred to in a number of academic studies as dependents of the male's wages, as people with many psychic disorders, as a passive population, and so on, but never as a productive, hardworking labour force, most of them doing two jobs, inside and outside the home.

Many scholars have considered as worthy of study only that part of the public world which was predominantly male, and have regarded as significant the study and movement of the public world as seen through male dominated eyes. Consequently they have failed to appreciate the contribution made by women to society.

The inadequacy of existing sociological theories to explain the life experiences of women led women social scientists to develop new theories, which are surveyed in chapter 10. As Margarita Rendel says:

"The development of new intellectual tools and concepts is one of the theoretical writings of the feminist movement in the United States, Britain, France and other countries. These theoretical writings have brought to light the weaknesses of both liberal, social democratic and Marxist interpretations. Together with empirical studies they show the pervasiveness of the oppression of women and the limited effect so far of measures to improve women's status". (Rendell 1980a:4-5)

Rendell goes on to stress that Women's Studies have the aim of bridging the gap between subjective and experiential knowledge on the one hand and academic knowledge on the other. What academic knowledge has searched for until now has been certainties and truths which could be proved: thus both subjective and experiential knowledge (which it tends to equate with 'prejudice' or 'anecdote') were devalued. But such knowledge, and the attitudes and behaviour that are based on it, are political and social phenomena that academics and politicians must take into account. At the present time subjective experience is not yet regarded as a form of knowledge. Rendell considers that:

...an illusion has been created that academic study can be freed of subjective values and made objective. The omission of subjective knowledge distorts the academic record. (1980a:5)

She goes on to argue that much of the work in Women's Studies tends to be interdisciplinary, the main reasons for this tendency being practicality on the one hand, and the nature of feminist studies on the other. This is in fact a criticism of academic and intellectual orthodoxies, since it implies that a single discipline is incomplete and insufficient.

The interdisciplinary nature of women's studies is very important and has considerable political implications for academic hierarchies:

Women's Studies bring together and legitimate both subjective and objective knowledge. They can end

the schism between the intellectually and the personally significant. (Hartnett, Rendell 1975:2)

The hope for the future is that as feminist knowledge and interpretations penetrate the academic world and ultimately become part of accepted common sense, women's self-esteem will be matched by men's respect for women as individuals who contribute to human achievement. The movement towards the sociology of knowledge, and the role of language in constructing that knowledge and reality(3), have given women the urge to question conventional male sociology and its explanations about social discourses.

In part the tendency of feminist research is to end the dichotomy between the subjective and the objective, and to recognise that the researcher is of the world being examined and brings to it orientations, knowledge and perspectives which are as much personal as they are objective or scientific. This makes feminism far more than a different approach, for it concerns over half the human race. Only feminism could have helped me to make sense of the women I studied, including the reason why these women and their problem seemed to me a necessary and valid research topic.

#### General Methodological Considerations

This research is based on a case study of 222 Greek Cypriot women, rural and urban, refugee and non-refugee, and concentrates on their position in their families and society. By using evidence gathered from the women

themselves I hope to make clear to the reader the extent of the discrimination I am studying and, most importantly, to contextualise these problems by showing that patriarchy is the normal state of affairs in Cyprus.

In Part I, I refer to the way in which this normalisation and its effects were made apparent to me by the situation of the wives of missing persons (WMPns). These women are treated here as a 'special case', in line with the approach adopted by Goldthorpe et al. in The Affluent Worker and Rapoport and Rapoport in Dual-Career Families (4). In both cases the researchers studied the "best case possible", hoping that their studies of a minority group would illuminate and help towards an understanding of the whole population. The WMPns, and similarly the problem women without men, will be used to highlight the universal disadvantages of Greek Cypriot women in sexual power relations.

In order to illustrate the importance of key informants and, indeed, of 'accidental' discovery as ways into this kind of study, let me give an example from someone else's research.

Juliet Du Boulay, an Oxford anthropologist who set out to study the life cycle of Greek peasants, selected Ambeli, a village in Euboea, for her fieldwork (5). She visited the village for the first time in order to find



accommodation, and describes a conversation she had with the first woman she happened to meet there. Du Boulay told the woman in broken Greek that she was looking for a room in which to stay for some months. "You can stay with the widow" replied the village woman, and promptly arranged it. The student anthropologist was pleased to find somewhere to stay, but did not realise at first just how lucky she had been. Her landlady turned out to be the best case study she could have found. "...She was one of the most fascinating and dramatic people in the village". She was a young, unprotected widow with a small child, whose husband had been killed in a quarrel in the village, and proved to be an invaluable source of information for Du Boulay about the position of women in Ambeli.

It was my encounter with a number of similarly "unprotected" women (widows, WMPns, divorced women, and women who had not yet married) that created the original impetus for this research, and they are central to my presentation and argument.

The first part of my fieldwork was a study of an illustrative sample of twenty seven wives and three fiancées of missing persons. I then undertook comparative studies of two groups, one consisting of ninety four rural women and the other of ninety eight urban women, which enabled me to draw out in detail the general problems faced by the entire Greek female population of the island. Like Du Boulay, I would like

to state from the outset that the focus of this study is primarily on the universal dominant aspects of Cypriot society and on the specific details of individual cases in so far as they reveal those universal aspects. I would like to argue that those aspects embody the fundamental social and metaphysical presuppositions on which the value system and those social practices are traditionally predicated.

These presuppositions find their chief expression in the people's understanding of the home and of the principal masculine and feminine roles within it and are based on an inherited tradition concerning the nature of good and evil. (Du Boulay 1974)

These inherited presuppositions and the traditional masculine and feminine roles which they tend to reproduce, inform institutional and domestic relations and practices. Such presuppositions, furthermore, are not simply inherited; they stand in a complex relationship to social practices, which in turn reproduce the presuppositions themselves, in the form of common sense beliefs. That the prevailing set of ideas and practices in Greek Cypriot society is a highly oppressive one for women, placing them in a position of inferiority, is something which the women themselves, have only recently been able to recognize and discuss, as a result of their particular experiences of crisis. This has led to a more general recognition of the contradictions.

As my case studies will bear out, this recognition and discussion is still profoundly difficult, since the same forces which place women in an inferior position are directly opposed to anything which might alter existing power relations.

In Part III of this thesis, I shall be addressing the questions of through what institutions and by what processes the oppressive institutional ideology relating to women and the family is supported and perpetuated. Part of my approach is to understand the ways in which, if at all, the 1974 war and its consequences alter, make visible or stabilise the institutions which administer and regulate society.

#### Brief history of the research

I began my fieldwork in Summer 1979, intending to study the particular case of the wives of missing persons. I conducted 30 unstructured interviews with such women and also contacted officials of the Church, the State and the Committee for Missing Persons. I then attempted an initial analysis of the data and wrote up this part of the fieldwork. I went on to read widely in the literature on War and Women in Europe and the USA. My argument at this point was developing along the following lines:

Wars generally involve men much more directly than women; fewer women die than men, but the women are deprived of their male protection on which they are

totally dependent in Cyprus.

During the 1974 war the lives of Cypriot women were rudely disrupted and some of them were killed.

Furthermore, rape was deliberately used by the invading forces as a technique of war, designed to make it easier to drive people away from their homes: Turkish men attacked Greek women who 'belonged' to Greek Cypriot men and thus violated their purity and innocence, the essence of their womanhood.

The WMPns faced the added problem of the long-term absence of the men and found it difficult to cope in this situation. Some of them, however, came to a new realisation of their capabilities and potential.

The questions that arose at this stage were: Have women's lives changed as a result of the war? Have their expectations changed? What was their situation before the war? In order to investigate these questions seriously and form a more complete picture of the position of the Greek Cypriot female population in the general in the so called normal situation, I decided to extend my study; I conducted fieldwork amongst a group of rural women in a small village which had received a number of refugees after the 1974 invasion, and followed this by a study on similar lines in an urban setting. The conventional labels Horio (village) and Poli (city) are used to designate these two locations. The

participants, too, have been given code numbers. The wives of missing persons are designated by the abbreviation WMPn; R6, refers to case study number 6 in the rural community, and U12 to case study number 12 in the urban community. The letter D refers to divorced women.

I promised my informants complete confidentiality, which explains why none of their names appear in the acknowledgements. However, I greatly value the contributions of all these women who helped me by confiding to me their very personal thoughts and problems, and am deeply indebted to them, since they frequently went out of their way to help me. I hope, too, that all my friends, relatives, colleagues and old and new acquaintances will forgive the anonymity in which I am compelled to leave them.

#### The theoretical approach

Having decided to explore the position of Greek Cypriot women both inside and outside the family, with particular reference to the effects on their position of the 1974 war, I began to read the relevant literature from a variety of related disciplines in the social sciences, in a search for a conceptual framework and theory to explore and test my ideas. Dissatisfied with the approach of any single discipline, I decided to adopt an interdisciplinary approach.

A fundamental question that arose was: What has conventional sociology to offer in terms of explaining the social phenomena that I was studying? It seemed to me that neither conventional nor Marxist sociology has a great deal to say on the subject, and that what has been written is not very helpful. Given the relative neglect by these disciplines of questions relating to the family and to women's lives, I was obliged to seek other models to find a theoretical context for my observations, and this explains why theories concerning sexual divisions and patriarchy occupy such an important position in this work. I have drawn to some extent on feminist theory, and although I am aware that this too has its limitations, I hope that it has given an added depth to my explanations of the situations I have studied.(6)

Very little has been written on the position of Greek Cypriot women, and the present study is of necessity an exploratory one, designed to describe their position and to suggest possible reasons to account for it. The approach adopted is inductive, rather than deductive proceeding from observation to interpretation. I am not concerned here to test a single sociological hypothesis on the position of women in Cypriot society: I shall attempt to apply sociological concepts, principles and established theories to the data collected, without restricting myself to any particular preconceived hypothesis.

I made use of a variety of methodological techniques,

combining 'participant observation' with open-ended questionnaires. I also made use of government records (7) and data from closed questionnaires (8) on subjects relevant to the main concern of the thesis.

I was aware at the time of my fieldwork of both the advantages and the disadvantages of Participant Observation; and that other orthodox anthropological and sociological techniques of qualitative research are labelled 'much more scientific'. One of the principles of Participant Observation is that the researcher must reside in the community that s/he is studying, the main reason for this being that residence greatly facilitates the establishment of close ties with the observed - the people under study. The researcher is then 'accepted' and becomes a member of the community, participating in its daily affairs. This is one of the reasons that I selected 'Horio', a village that I knew very well, and 'Poli', the town in which I lived as an adult. By so doing, I was able to make use of all the background information I had gained through my previous visits and contacts in these two locations. It might be argued that no one ever does fieldwork with an 'open mind' and that the difference, in this context, between myself and a foreign anthropologist or sociologist would not be that I had preconceptions, whereas s/he had not, but that I would have different preconceptions. The preconceptions of a native, however, as Cutileiro (1971) argues, are more firmly rooted in experience, and above all they are extensively ramified. They are bound to affect one's

research in a deeper, if not more self conscious way:

Even when they are right and allow him to concentrate more fully on important points, and to master information which only a long cultural acquaintance is able to select and make sense of, an important problem remains. The native will be quicker and more perceptive, mainly with regard to details or isolated stances. (1971:viii)

I was, however, aware that being a member of the culture one studies creates some problems, one of which is the difficulty of forming an objective view of a society of which, at least at some levels of experience, the researchers themselves are part. Diana Leonard (1980) refers to similar problems and dilemmas that she herself experienced in her own research.

At the level of description it is an advantage to be of the culture one is studying: one has few problems of language and can understand nuances which would be lost on an outsider. One also has a rough outline of some of the likely points of interest in the field of study before starting. On the other hand, analysis is in some ways more difficult than of an alien system, for one must try to note one's implicit assumptions and to describe as to an outsider, while overcoming the depressing conviction that one is stating the obvious. And the obverse of understanding nuances, etc., is that one is not excused, as a foreigner might be, the asking of naive, impertinent or prying questions. These constraints can be combined when one is interviewing in people's homes, where one feels that one is in some ways a guest. (Leonard, 1980:272)

In my case, I feel it was a great advantage that I knew not only the Greek language but also the Cypriot dialect of my informants, for even a Greek, let alone a complete foreigner, would have some difficulty with the different pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax of Cypriot. My own feeling is that my close relationship with the culture I



have been studying was highly advantageous. I may claim to be intimately acquainted with Cypriot society as a whole, and relatively knowledgeable about the general historical and social trends on the island. As a result, I found it relatively easy to relate my observations to historical and sociological phenomena that extend beyond the individual experience of each woman interviewed. Moreover, the fact that I am a woman enabled me to involve myself in and observe events not accessible to a male researcher. I would argue that in Cyprus only female researchers could conduct intimate interviews with women like those from Horio and Poli, or collect sensitive information about familial relations and ask questions concerning the socialisation of adult women and their aspirations for the future of their children.

I began by trying to gain the trust of the participant, and then that of her 'protector' and spokesman, whether husband, father or brother-in-law. During this process, I had to face some of the ethical questions that have confronted other researchers.(9) Was I prepared to tell them about myself? Was I prepared to give them as much delicate, sensitive information as I was asking them to give to me? Since this was the first case study of its kind, it was far from easy to pave the way in the difficult social conditions that pertained in Cyprus in 1979 and 1980. I decided to depart from the stereotype of the 'impersonal, 'aloof' researcher, since this would alienate my participants and invalidate the data, because they would either tell me conscious or

unconscious 'lies', or would not tell me enough for me to be able to form a complete picture of their situation. On the other hand, I tried to keep my distance and be just a listener when the woman was talking; and when the participant was involved in other interesting interactions, I was a careful observer from the corner of the room or courtyard.

None of my interviews was formal. This is an important point, and contrasts with the approach of Attalides, another sociologist who has studied Greek Cypriot culture, who faced what he called an 'official' attitude from male respondents:

...an attitude to project into the interviewing situation a rather high degree of formality in manner of speech and in the views expressed. This often expressed itself in a preference to analyse the condition of Cypriot social affairs generally rather than their own specific case. (1981:41)

Finally, I would like to note that the research involved so many untouched questions and areas of enquiry that it could easily have occupied a whole team of researchers. A team like the one responsible for the book Lysi (10) or the Sociopsychological Research Group (11) could have given a broader picture of the social order in Cyprus today, and the position of women in it. Ideally, many more women would have been interviewed, and more issues examined in greater detail. This, however, would have involved much more time than was available for the present study, in which I have attempted merely to break the surface of the disturbing issue of Cypriot women and their life experiences today.

Although my sample was small (222 women), the range was wide. Their ages ranged from 15 to 75, and the sample included married women, divorced and separated women, widows, and young and older unmarried women (the latter being labelled as those who have failed to get married). In terms of social class, all five classes were represented (see ch.6)

In her description of her study of housework (Sociology of Housework, Ann Oakley makes the following comment:

There is a widespread tendency in Social Science and in more popular discussions of opinion/attitude surveys to assume that a large sample provides some automatic guarantee of reliable results, while a small one promises unreliability. This misconception is based on a naive idea of what constitutes 'validity' and 'representativeness' in research procedure. Statistical representativeness is not, of course, assured simply by means of large numbers; a large sample, running into several hundreds of thousands, may be selected in a way which makes it unrepresentative of the general population, while a small sample may, conversely, meet more precisely the criterion of representativeness. (Oakley, 1974:31)

I selected my sample according to relevant categories of individuals. The limitations of graduate research reduced the proportional and numerical representativeness of my sample.

## 2. Resources Used

Until recently anthropological and sociological literature on Cyprus has either concerned itself with the study of a village community as a whole, or has dealt with historical and political issues relating to the anti-colonial struggles and the life of the island

in the post-colonial period. It has completely ignored women as a group. Yet Cypriot women played their role in the life of the country. I was particularly impressed by how affected Cypriot women were, and still are, by the war of 1974, and this seemed to me to highlight still further the lack of attention paid in the literature to women in Cyprus.

In addition to my own knowledge of the situation and the findings of my fieldwork, I made use of a number of library and governmental sources. The former consisted mainly of the reports of social scientists, historians, sociologists, economists and anthropologists who have conducted research into the main features and the values of Greek and Cypriot culture, and into various aspects of similar societies - namely, those of Turkey, Italy, Spain, Portugal, North Africa, Egypt and Israel.

In 1973-4 three Cypriot sociologists, Markides, Nikita and Rangou, studied the life-styles and values of the Greek Cypriots of Lysi, a large flourishing village on the plains of Mesaoria. Their book, Lysi - social change in a Cypriot village (1978) was a guiding force in the planning of my rural fieldwork.

Attalides, another Cypriot sociologist, presented a thorough study of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, in his Social Change and Urbanization in Cyprus (1981). I benefited enormously from his work, and made use of his findings in the planning of my urban fieldwork.

Attalides attempts to analyse the development of a particular town in a particular society in order to indicate where it has followed similar patterns of development to, and has characteristics in common with, other cases of urbanisation, and where it differs from them. In the process he examines the fruitfulness of a number of theoretical schemes for studying patterns of urbanisation. In addition to his statistics, I found the extracts from interviews referring to questions such as housing and dowries of particular value.

Rangou, an educational sociologist, published the results of her research on Urbanization and social mobility in contemporary Cypriot society early in 1982. This is a study of the development of the economy and the educational opportunities and geographical mobility of rural people, which have produced a strong urbanization movement; it was particularly valuable in supporting the material presented here in chapter 8.

John Peristiany (1955) discusses the social values of honour and shame in rural Cyprus from an anthropological perspective in Honour and shame in a Cypriot Highland Village, a work I found interesting in terms of illustrating what and who have been studied in Cypriot society. My own fieldwork in a similar rural setting some twenty five years later demonstrates the persistence and ideological strength of such values.

Patterns of Politics and Kinship in a Greek Cypriot Community between 1920-1980 by P.Sant Cassia (1981) deals with the patterns of property transference in Peyia, a village in the district of Paphos; his findings are very similar to those of my own fieldwork in Horio, a village removed both geographically and socially from Peyia.

Of those who have written in English on Cyprus, I would like to make special mention of P.Loizos, whose research and publications have generally informed my work. The Greek Gift (1975), for all its limitations in failing to treat the position of women in the village he studied, gives a comprehensive picture of the male world in pre-1974 Cyprus. His table on social classes in the village was particularly interesting. In Violence and the family: some Mediterranean examples, (1978) he discusses in detail some issues relating to the lives of women, including marital relationships and wife-battering, both of which subjects were relevant to my work. His latest book, The Heart Grown Bitter, a chronicle of Cypriot refugees, was even more relevant to my subject matter since it deals with postwar Cyprus and Cypriot women who, as refugee women struggling for the survival of their families, are given a special position in the book.

Names should be mentioned here that belong to a different category, whose work I read in conjunction

with reports connected with my full-time work amongst the Greek Cypriot community in London, and with a pilot study of Greek Cypriot married women in Haringey that I conducted in 1978. I read with great interest the work of R.Oakley on Greek Cypriots in North London and realised then the extent to which the Cypriots who have settled in London since the 1950s have brought with them the values and life styles of rural Cyprus. F.Anthias, in a number of articles and in her doctoral thesis, the first draft of which she kindly allowed me to read in 1980-81, has drawn attention to the triple oppression of immigrant Cypriot women, as well as some general questions relating to ethnicity and class among Greek Cypriots in London. P.Constantinides has furthered my understanding of Greek Cypriot culture through both her written and her oral comments. I should add here the work of Sarah Ladbury, whose research into the Turkish Cypriot communities in London and Cyprus I studied carefully, though I make only a few references to Turkish and Turkish Cypriot women.

Of the anthropological literature on Greece, I found enriching the work of Campbell on a community of Sarakatsani shepherds (Honour, Family and Patronage: 1964). I also benefitted from reading Margaret Kenna's Property and Ritual Relationship on a Greek Island (1971) and Juliet du Boulay's Portrait of a Greek Mountain Village (1974), especially the chapters on "Men and women: their human and divine natures" and the "Pursuit and control of family interest in the

community". The work of R.Hirschon, The social institutions of an urban locality of refugee origin in Piraeus, Greece (D.Phil. thesis, 1976), Women, the Aged and religious activity (1981), and Open Body, Closed Space (1982), also proved of value to the development of my argument. In addition to the above, I have also covered the literature on a variety of aspects of Greek family life published in Greek, by Greek researchers.

In the field of general theory, I have covered the feminist literature on the issues of patriarchy as a pervasive ideology in relation to social structure, institutions and practices with reference to Western Capitalism. Some of these writings I discuss in some detail in chapter 10. The literature on women in the Third World is far less developed, but I have covered most of it during the initial stages of my work. I have also drawn on Greek, Greek Cypriot and other literary authors, whose importance I would not wish to ignore.

In the field of Mediterranean anthropology, I found the following extremely helpful: the work of D.Kandiyoti on Turkish women, immigration and development; Nira Yuval Davies' critical look at Israel and the position of women in Jewish religion; J.Ebeid's work on Egyptian women, employment and family life (D.Phil. 1981); N.Davis, Land and Family in Pisticci (1974), and Caldwell, Changes in Legislation and the Family



(1982), which deal with Italy; J.A.Pitt Rivers, The People of Sierra (1963), on Spain; and J.Cutileiro, A Portuguese rural society (1971), on Portugal. All of these helped me to understand the similarities between the experiences of women in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and the work of Mernissi on Moroccan women and on Islam broadened my understanding of the issue of women and religion, which is a central theme in my thesis.

Turning to governmental sources, I consulted all the demographic reports since 1976 from the Department of Statistics and Research, and all the documents from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and the Social Welfare Department relating to refugee and other families seriously affected by the war. I also made use of the reports of UN experts sent to assist the Government of Cyprus to establish realistic programmes for reconstruction after the war. The areas of employment, modernisation, fertility and family policy were all examined by these reports. To cite an example : the most recent work by the ILO expert W.J.House at the Planning Bureau in Nicosia, on the "Female Force Participation and Sex Discrimination in Cyprus", has served as a useful analysis and statistical source, which supported my own findings.

I also collected articles from Greek Cypriot newspapers and read them carefully, in order to survey the policies of all the political parties, as well as the opinions of

and statements by representatives of the Church and the State.\* Newspapers from the period August 1974-May 1979 have been surveyed for items on the question of missing persons, and to a lesser extent that of rape during the war. A comparison of several articles commenting on the same event on the same day reveals the way of thinking of the mainly male journalists of different political allegiances. By contrast, during the debates on defloration and on new grounds for divorce, in the Autumn of 1979, some articles presented a very progressive point of view, which not only favoured change in the family law but also made recommendations for absolutely essential changes that it was felt the Church should be pressurised to implement.

Unpublished resources: I was fortunate to meet in London a number of lecturers, researchers and other Ph.D students working on Cyprus on similar areas of Mediterranean or feminist studies; not only did I gain access to their unpublished work, but I also had the chance to have some interesting and very challenging discussions with them.

Photographs: the photograph in the prolegomena is a small-scale reproduction of a painting by A.Diamantis. Chapters 1 and 2 contain a number of photographs of WMPns presented to me by the women interviewed. One participant opened her family album to me and went back to her childhood. Step by step she took me through her whole life, and then offered to let me take copies of

the photographs and use them in the presentation of my analysis. Without naming these people, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to them for their willingness to release valuable documents of their lives to me.

The use of photographs is rare in standard sociological books, articles and theses, except where the image is the subject of study, as in interpretations of art, although the use of photographs is much more accepted in social anthropology. Yet feminist work has drawn attention to how the social identity of women is not solely constructed by approved behaviour and ways of speaking; femininity is also established in terms of being looked at - that is, femininity is visualised. There is also now a literature that recognises the centrality of photographs, especially those of the family album to family identity and personal memory. Finally, I would argue that the images I have used offer to those unfamiliar with Cyprus an important access to the social reality which no textual description could give.

The use of photographs in this thesis is not entirely unproblematic, as the photographs are of ritualised contexts. Here there may well be a negotiation, even collusion, between the sitters and the photographer (usually a man) in order to achieve not only a visual representation of individuals but, of equal importance, a representation of the ritual presentation in space of

relations of power. The photograph is thus a highly complex set of messages (See Corrigan P. and Spence J. 1985 - in press - Family Album Workbook.)

NOTES FOR THE INTRODUCTION

1. It is accepted by many historians and political commentators on Cyprus that the Greeks and Turks of the island have much in common since both communities consider Cyprus as their homeland and they share love for and pride in it. The fact that in 1974, 11 years after the December 1963 intercommunal conflict, 48 mixed villages existed shows that bonds between the two communities were still strong.

2. Attalides (1981), for his study "Social change and urbanization", decided to interview heads of households and these in 1973 could only be men.

3. Dale Spender "Man made language"

4. Rapoport R and Rapoport R (1976) Dual career families reexamined, Martin Robertson, London.

5. Du Boulay J (1974) discusses in length 'Men and Women' in terms of their human and divine natures.

6. Very early during my pilot study I found out that there was a gap between 'textbook recipes' for interviewing and the actual practice in research on women. As A Oakley puts it:

The relative undervaluation of women's models has led to an unreal theoretical characterisation of the interview as a means of gathering sociological data which cannot and does not work in practice. This lack of fit between the theory and practice of interviewing is especially likely to come to the fore when a feminist interviewer is interviewing women (who may or may not be feminists). (1981:31, in Helen Roberts: DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH).

7. W. J. House 1982 in Proceedings of the National workshop on the UNFPA/ILO project: Population, Employment planning and labour force mobility in Cyprus.

8. The book 'Cypriot Woman', a collective work by the sociopsychological group, was published in 1982.

9. Ann Oakley 1981 'Interviewing women' pp.30-61 (in Helen Roberts : DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH, R&P, London) discusses some of the ethical questions that women researchers are confronted with when researching amongst women.

10. Markides, Nikita and Rangou, 1978; LYSI: social change in a Greek Cypriot village.

11. THE SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP: Refugees of Cyprus, Nicosia 1976.

12. Until 1982 when the book THE CYPRIOT WOMAN was published by THE SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP, and when the ILO expert W.J. House undertook the project on discrimination and segregation of women workers in Cyprus, the 'woman' question was very lightly touched upon once or twice a year in social gatherings.

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CHAPTER 1 - WAR AND WOMEN

- 1.1      Introducing the problem.
- 1.2      "In her own words".
  - a) Points from the interview relating to the women's experiences just after being released from the occupied area.
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- 1.3      Further illustrations.
- 1.4      The general effect of the war.
- 1.5      The War and women
  - a) General effects
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    - Enclaved women
    - Women who lost their husbands because of the war: Widows and Wives of Missing Persons.

## CHAPTER 1. WAR AND WOMEN

### 1.1 Introducing the problem

In July 1979 I started my fieldwork enquiries having in mind a number of general questions such as: In what ways are the lives of Greek-Cypriot women different from those of Greek-Cypriot men? How have these differences been produced and how are they reproduced? And, tentatively, what are the possibilities for change?

The first group of women that attracted my interest and around whom I prepared my plans for observation and interviews were the wives and fiancées of Missing Persons. As a result of this interest the following conversation took place in Nicosia in 1979, five years after the war. My companion's words showed how much the war remained with her:

"Where are they? What can we do after five years of waiting for them? They are not coming back are they? . I was married for only two months when the war started. He had to join the army to 'save the country'. The country was not saved, and he is lost....."

Her words trailed off in tears. She is one of hundreds of Cypriot women who belong to the category of WMPns. Their husbands were lost during the

July-August 1974 war in Cyprus, either as undeclared prisoners of war or as men missing in action.

Photograph 1.1 WHERE ARE THEY?



Source P.I.O. Nicosia)

This photograph and some of those that follow were taken during demonstrations in the years after the

invasion. Some of my participants had cut these photographs out of the newspapers in which they were published, and showed them to me to prove that they really had taken part in the demonstrations. They are graphic records of their pain.

The situation of these women is presented here not primarily to illustrate (though it does) the very real miseries and hardships that an invasion imposes upon a human population but because it highlights the dependent status of women in Greek Cypriot society. It exposes the various ways in which they are positioned as dependent within existing power relations and thus provides a clear way into the problem of analysing and understanding that position. These women provide a poignant illustration of how Greek-Cypriot women in general depend on their relations with men for their social definition, status and, to all intents and purposes, their right to exist.

My starting point is therefore to present an extended interview with a WMPn, and to draw out the implications of her experiences and present situation for the WMPns in particular and for Greek Cypriot women in general. My informant -WMPn15- is a 35 year old woman from a rural working-class background. She was born in a village of about 1,000 inhabitants in the North of Cyprus, where she lived until the war.



She is a mother of two sons, five and seven years old. She has no brother and her father is dead, her husband is lost and she feels completely 'unprotected' since there is no adult male relative on whose protection she can rely. She is the third of seven daughters, all refugees now, and at the time of the interview she was living at the governmental settlement 3, Strovolos, very near the capital of Cyprus, with her aged mother and one of her sisters, who has also lost her husband. These two women are her closest kin; three lonely women with many problems, who help each other and have managed up to now to cope with so many difficulties.

My participant had the appearance of a 55 or 60 year old woman if one were to compare her with an average English woman today. Pain has visibly left its marks on her face, and her dress showed her status - an old, grey, old fashioned dress that would attract nobody's attention, convention determining that she should be effectively invisible to male eyes in her husband's absence.

I first met this woman in 1979, introduced by the wife of another MPn. We subsequently had several coffees together, or took her boys to the nearby fields to play, and talked about general issues until she felt sufficient confidence in an unrelated stranger, -

although a Greek Cypriot woman - 'to open her heart' to me. My translation of the transcript of her story follows. (1)

1.2. In her own words

"We were seven daughters and no sons in our family and my parents had a hard life to feed and clothe us all. As children we would help in the fields and at home with the housework from a very early age. In fact the only time that I remember spending with my father was when we were both working in the fields, me as a young girl then, and we had the chance to talk to each other.

According to the custom of our village, which I think was practised all over Cyprus, each one of us should be engaged in order of seniority; only after the marriage of the eldest sister and her settlement in her own separate household. But, in our family, I don't know why, we didn't follow the tradition. The fourth was married last of all while the fifth has older children than the second. In my case, being the third daughter, I expected to marry after my second sister but what happened was unexpected. After the marriage ceremony of our eldest, my husband-to-be, a young man, two years older than me and from our village, sent his proposal for me instead of for the second daughter, asking through his 'match-maker' especially for me because he liked me and wanted to marry me. I didn't know him at all although he was born and lived in our village.

My father refused because he didn't want to leave out his second daughter in case people thought that she had any kind of deficiencies and she wasn't as marriageable as me. Maybe my father asked the match-maker to tell the man that he did not want to make his second daughter feel jealous towards her sister, nor bitter towards her parents for arranging my marriage when it was her turn.

Hearing that, my husband-to-be went to my sister's work and asked to speak to her about a serious subject. He told her that he wanted to marry me and that he was willing to wait for her

to get married and then 'ask for my hand', again. She answered that she appreciated his intentions but that she was most willing to let her sister get engaged first.

She took the initiative to speak to our father about it and persuaded him to proceed with my engagement. I was already 22 and my husband-to-be was 24 when we got engaged.

Both of us came from poor families and they couldn't help us to build our own house before marriage. My mother-in-law, in fact, objected to our engagement because I didn't have a large dowry bringing with me neither house nor fields, but it seems that my husband loved me already and was not influenced by his mother and two older sisters, unlike many other young men in Cyprus.

On the other hand, my father-in-law liked me and supported me always: He used to say "Since my son chose her, it doesn't matter if she is poor".

Both of us, my husband-to-be and I, worked hard and saved some money and, with the help of my family, we started our house, building only the necessary rooms.

Two years after the engagement we got married because I was pregnant. We continued to work hard to save money to finish our house, a dream that the two of us alone managed to fulfil a month before the invasion in June 1974. I remember myself in the ninth month of my second pregnancy scraping the floors of wet paint, polishing the marble verandas and putting curtains in the new rooms. We had a nice living room, full of light. I gave birth to our second child, another boy, soon after that and had only a few days at my new house, beautifully decorated, with my Lefkara laces (2) - all made by me - on the tables and side-tables. I was so happy those few days; my husband too. But we were, we are, my children also, so unlucky, to lose him, (she sobs) ... my husband; and not only him but our village also and our newly-built house; everything that was ours was lost in a few days. We had a good life together. It was hard work but we loved each other.

When I think of the first days of the war and what happened to us, I go mad. We were all taken prisoner because we didn't have a car, nor did we have the chance to escape like some other villagers. It was on the 14th of August 1974, in a village in Mesaoria - an area near Nicosia.

The Turkish soldiers separated men from women and children, and took my husband with the other men to the nearby school of A., another bigger village, and shut them inside.

We were left behind, locked in a house for several days and then taken to V. another nearby village in Mesaoria district, where we were provided with food and milk for the children by some good Turkish officers. They said that at V. this village that had many prisoners, there was a contagious disease and so the Turks sent us, women and children, to the free areas, through the United Nations. My youngest child, a two month old baby, suffered so much under imprisonment because I gave him so many different makes of milk, so little attention, in crowded houses, hearing crying all day, with little rest for him and myself. His life as a young baby continued as hard as that as a refugee baby no father, no house, no money and not a good capable mother to look after him. My sister and mother helped me when they could.

On the day that we were freed, I remember arriving at Larnaca in the afternoon, throwing the children into my mother's hands and running with my sister, a six months pregnant woman whose husband was also in the same group as mine taken prisoner by the Turks, running, literally running, to see the newspapers with the names of the prisoners of war, and find any people from the Government to ask about our husbands and report about the fighting and when they were caught. The next day I went to my husband's doctor to get a special certificate, because he was ill, and send it to the Turks to influence them to set him free as soon as possible. I could never believe that they were to keep them for so long... (crying) Now that years have gone by ... (crying).

We first settled in an orphanage in Larnaca. Then one of my sisters sent her husband and brought us to Strovolos in Nicosia where they managed to rent a small house for all of us. We were twenty people in that old house and the landlord complained so we had to split up and move here and there. I stayed in another old house, very damp. My baby got a serious illness. One of his lungs closed and I suffered a lot to cure him. Then we built a small house in the Kykkos farm area - we seized land from the Church, like other refugees, and all the family moved in. Our mother was always with us because my father died before the war and she was alone.

Four years after the war, the Government gave us this house in this Settlement No. 3. It has two bedrooms. I didn't ask for a bigger house although I had my mother and two younger sisters who were studying at the secondary school; - you see, before the war I wanted to help my mother economically to educate even these two of us and I put pressure on her to send them to school, the Gymnasium (Secondary School of Pallouriotissa). My husband and myself were paying for their fees and the other sisters were helping with uniforms and books. After we became refugees, the Government didn't ask for fees so they have managed to finish their studies now, get married and have their own houses. Holy Mother you can see how much we suffered.

By this time my informant was crying but insisting on continuing the interview.

...You asked me about the 'Pancyprian Committee for Missing Persons' and if I have contacts with it now. Yes, from the beginning, I went to them with the details about my husband. I know the President, Father Christophoros, and like so many other women, followed his advice and attended the organised all-night prayers in churches, sittings and demonstrations outside embassies, as well as visits to the President and Archbishop. Once, only once, I had the courage to speak in a meeting and ask them not to call our husbands that is missing persons, because they, or most of them, were with us four days after the cease fire and they were arrested in front of our eyes as prisoners of war but in the end they were not declared. We should call them Undeclared Prisoners of War.

For me now the facts are like that. I used to leave my children with my mother and stop work for an afternoon or a whole day, to be present at these demonstrations; we went here and there but gained nothing more than words of comfort. My nerves can't stand this any more. I don't go anywhere now because I don't want to hear anything that is only words. I don't want hopes that become ashes after a few days.

This June (1979) the talks started again about the problem of missing persons. I didn't let myself - I tried hard not to - have hopes of getting them, my husband included, back. When the Government in America changed we expected some solution in Cyprus especially to this problem of missing persons which is so painful, and we supported Carter. Do you remember?

Nothing happened. He deceived us like all of them. Now we will be waiting for the next one. Nothing, no change is going to happen again.

To see your people dying or hear true witness about their death, is really terrible, but in the end one accepts it and forgets ... life continues. But to wait for five years now and wait in agony over their suffering, if they are still alive ... it is unbearable .... (she cried again.)

I don't think only of me and my loneliness but also what to tell my children. Stelios, my older boy, used to call every man that looked like my husband 'Daddy' and expected a response from him. The young one who does not remember him at all asks about him all the time because he is jealous of the other children who have fathers. I made a mistake from the beginning of telling them that he is abroad and that he will come back one day. Nobody can understand the pain I feel when I discuss this subject with the children.

Before the war, I worked in a shoe-making factory Bata, near the 'Green Line' (2). I faced problems getting my job back because I stopped when I gave birth to the second child. The factory didn't have much work at that time and because I needed money desperately, I had to beg them to give me back my job, although they knew that my husband was lost and I had nobody to support me. I work long hours, leaving home at 6 o'clock in the morning and coming back late in the afternoon. Some days, I stay for a few hours overtime because I need the money. It is very tiring but what can I do? The fact that I work gives me the chance to get away from home, get some money and arrange the life of my children as I want.

My children are the only precious things left to me. My youngest one, as I told you before, had a difficult beginning to his life and he became very weak; his health is very sensitive and needs my attention all the time. I wish I didn't have to work and could stay with them all day. I remember that when the first cheque from the Government came, £8 per month, it was only enough for the doctors. It was so difficult. Yes, now they give more for the children. If I add my salary to what the Government gives, we can live and cope with the necessary expenses in life.

I know that other wives of missing persons also have economic problems because even those whose husbands had money in the bank cannot use it for their children.

My cousin can't sell her car because it's in her husband's name. It's in the yard, a piece of rotting property now. It's unfair, it makes me very angry because they don't realise that all of us have bad nerves, face so many problems, and can't cope with the childrens' needs and on top of everything else we have the law to prevent us from taking the necessary actions to solve some of our problems.

I've been feeling very weak lately; since the war I've had so many things to cry about but I don't manage to cry and relieve myself. I went to the doctor again this summer and he gave me some tablets. They were very strong and I couldn't work so I went back and asked for some lighter ones, although I would like to avoid them altogether.

Well yes I don't know who (meaning in Cyprus) is a hundred per cent healthy after all these troubles that fell on our shoulders. What I try to do is hold back my nerves and not use violence on the children.

There's another problem that bothers me very much and makes me sad; that is the relationship with my in-laws. They didn't like me very much from the beginning because I didn't have a big dowry and although they loved my husband more than the others in the family, they objected to our marriage, especially my mother-in-law. We rarely see each other now, not only because we are scattered all over free Cyprus, but also because we are not friendly with each other any more. Some of my in-laws don't even know my youngest child. One of my husband's sisters calls here to visit her in-laws but never stops to see us. That's why my children don't recognise them as their relatives. They don't care about us so we don't bother to visit them, except on rare occasions like engagements and marriages or burials. Recently, we had an engagement invitation and my sister, the one who is able to drive, wanted to take me to the party and insisted on me buying new clothes so I had a black velvet jacket and a light pink blouse. I felt so different dressing up and going out for the first time in so many years. When we went there, with the children, we were unhappy amongst them. They didn't treat the children with love

and affection, nor did they ask me caring questions about them. I felt as if their looks at me were criticising my clothes. Only my father-in-law and one of the boys who is studying at Athens University behaved to me in such a way as to make me feel a relative.

I remember once, soon after we were released from the Turks that, as refugees, we had been given some clothes and it happened that a red skirt was my size and I put it on, not having anything better, to go down to Nicosia where one of my husband's sisters had a shop selling clothes. I had only one pound cash on me and intended to buy a cheap dress of a dark colour. My sister-in-law made very embarrassing comments to me about the colour of the skirt and said that I should be ashamed to move around not wearing black since my husband was missing.

Do I want to attract the attention of other men? That's what people say, my dear, it's a proverb - Red is only for the insane, those who don't and can't, think of the consequences of their acts - She never thought of my condition, my sorrows, the necessity to wear it. My inlaws don't think of me or my children anymore, except to criticise us. The old saying, which holds true in my case is: The ox has died, so our co-operation contracts have finished.

By the end of the interview which lasted for an hour and a half, the woman was exhausted; she had cried many times and I tried to comfort her, offering to stop the interview and change the subject. But she insisted that she wanted to go on, to get everything out, and find relief. And she added:

Not many people have the patience and the kindness to listen to my problems.



Her pain was really unbearable. Only everyday problems, hard work and her children keep her alive:

- Why do I live, she asked, and answered:
- To bring up my sons.
- What is the future for me? Only devotion to them. I am them, now as you see me badly dressed, in the oldish grey colours, my hair straight back, my eyes without hope, my mouth without a smile.

Before giving excerpts from interviews with other WMPNs I shall draw out the significant points arising from this one. These points will simply be listed at this stage, not developed. I seek merely to bring them to the reader's attention. They will be analysed in Parts II and, especially III of the thesis. This account shows the effect of the sudden loss of everything: (loved ones), belongings, home and village. This participant lost her husband and became a refugee. Poor to begin with, she became far poorer. Her account of the immediate effects of the war expresses her agony about her husband's sufferings and her baby's illnesses. For my purposes, however, it is first of all her account of her experiences as a refugee and husbandless wife - what she says about her day-to-day struggles to survive and her social position - that is of special interest here.

- a) Points relating to her experiences just after being released from the occupied area:

Her housing problems and her baby's serious illness show up the shortcomings of State Welfare, necessarily aggravated in such a crisis. Post-war health conditions were bad and provisions inadequate so that she had to pay private doctors to be sure that her baby was given enough attention.

Financial and employment problems were also intensified after the war. Her difficulties at the factory show how the destruction and impoverishment of the country as a whole affected her financial condition very badly. The fact that she was a wife of a MPn and a mother of two young children did not make it any easier to regain her previously permanent job.

She turned to the State for support but the help from the Welfare Services was inefficient and inadequate. She went to the Church, to discover that prayers did not solve her problems, and she fell back on her extended family. But the most upsetting problem waited for her there; after the loss of her husband, and on top of the misery created by the war, bad relationships developed

or were intensified between her and her in-laws, the other half of her kin support. It is always considered bad in Cyprus to be on bad terms with one's in laws or family of origin and the blame is laid mainly on the woman; in this case, the bad relationship had an added significance: the link, her husband, was absent and his family showed only a critical attitude and gave no practical help although there were many males in the family who could solve some practical problems like driving her to the doctor's on time, filling in governmental forms, applications for housing, etc. Even her father-in-law, who supported her to some extent before was no longer able or didn't want to see her as a member of his family, in terms of his obligations towards her; if she dared to offend the family honour however, she would definitely be criticised. So her family of origin had no males to protect her while her in-laws became both unsupportive and critical in a contradictory way.

There was also a lack of any other support group since, firstly, old neighbours and friends were scattered because of the war and resettlement in the south and, secondly, there was no women's support group. Her political awareness and her social involvement was very limited since

everything outside familial, private issues had been dealt with by her husband before the war. She did not even join a trade union, although she had been a paid worker since her early adolescence.

Realising that she could not find enough support from the above mentioned institutions or groups, did she feel free to take the initiative and struggle for her interests? On the contrary, Cypriot society conveyed to her through various social rules, that as a young, single woman she had to act in a certain way. Having been deprived both of her emotional fulfilment in her relationship with her husband, and of the social status of the married woman, she finds her position quite inhibiting. She faces a kind of triple disadvantage:

1. As a single, refugee and poor mother she has to work hard to feed her children.
2. As a single woman she has to dress almost like a widow, being and feeling like a special kind of 'false widow' whom the government tries to persuade that her husband is alive and will

come back, but whom society tries to remind that she must dress as a widow so as not to attract the attention of other men.

3. As a Greek Orthodox woman she has to account to herself first and then to the whole social group, her 'collectivity' (that is, the two families of origin and in-laws, neighbours, the priest, the social worker and her doctor) about her behaviour towards children, in-laws, colleagues at work, etc.

b) Points relating to the traditional social order of Greek-Cypriot society

The persistence of the arranged marriage system as well as the importance of the dowry and the woman's relationship with her in-laws come clearly through this interview. A house for the newly weds was absolutely necessary and it should have been built by the bride's parents. Failing that, the couple had to work hard to build their own house. They managed to finish it only a few weeks before the 15th July and they lost it by the 14th August 1974.

On the other hand, there is some change, some breaking down of the ideal representation of social order. The fact that the women in her family were not married in order of seniority shows that the old system of the eldest daughter being married first, before any proposal for the second is accepted, is not being followed in this case. Similarly, the reaction of her husband-to-be to her father's refusal to consider him for the third daughter was a reaction against the traditional order.

He took the initiative in finding the sister and affected party, to address her, an unrelated woman, face to face and get her permission to send his proposal for the mentioned bride. As a follow up to this breaking of the social rules, the second daughter of this story, who according to traditional values should have been offended and angry at not having received the proposal, was enthusiastic about her sister's luck. She found the courage to speak to her father, and supported the bridegroom.

Another important point emerges out with the fact that pre-marital sex was not considered a social crime if it happened 'with one's fiancé'. This woman spoke about her premature pregnancy without

showing any guilt. The rules about sexuality have been slightly modified; taboo issues like premarital sexuality were excused in situations where marriage and legality were ensured.

- c) Other points relevant here, that will be analysed later in the thesis are the following:

The Church is clearly presented as a landlord whose land is not offered to the refugee population; it is in fact seized by the woman's family and most probably without Church consent. In the summer of 1980 there were a number of refugees still squatting on Church land.

Education is highly valued in Cypriot society and this woman shares with her parents the expenses of educating her sisters although she has already started her own family, and in financial terms she is not well off. On the other hand she does believe that the ultimate aim of her educated sisters should also be to get married, have a house and children of their own. Education is to facilitate marriage and make it a success, raising the status of the whole family.

The legal system of the country emerges from this interview as actually functioning to prevent rehabilitation and the alleviation of burdens: the wives of missing persons did not have access to their 'wealth', their property or their husband's name. Committees had to be set up and relatives to be consulted, the case to be presented to court if an old car were to be exchanged or money to be taken out of the bank for children's education.

In conclusion I would like to repeat that the interviews with WMPns illustrate a double or triple oppression. This is exercised by the Church in a subtle way and by the State through the legal system. It is reproduced in all social practices and relations, and is reinforced by the expansionist policies of foreign powers. These women, who have lost their economic and social representative, struggle to survive in a male-dominated society. Most of them had to take over the role of the breadwinner and to deal with all the problems and difficulties which this role entails. And yet they did not acquire any real independence or autonomy - quite the opposite; these women are obstructed by State, Church and society, which must ultimately raise the question of how abnormal or exceptional their positions are, and whether their extreme situation merely illustrates



the more extensive and silent normal social construction and regulation of women's social identities. This is the major question to be addressed in this thesis.

### 1.3 Further illustrations:

I give here more quotations from interviews with WMPns that took place in summer 1979 in rural and urban Cyprus. These additional excerpts will serve to reinforce the points to which I have drawn attention.

#### From husband back to father

We had our own house and our only child was one month old when the war started. My husband joined the army like the others and was lost with his whole group. I turned to my parents for support and practical help with the baby. I was desperate because it wasn't only my husband who was missing but my only brother as well who had fought with him. My mother was very much into her pain as her only son who was abroad studying in England for four years and came to see her during that summer was also lost. (WMPn 2, a 29 year old woman mother of a child of 5).

#### Sharing the pain with your relatives - or self reliance

I have only one sister who tried with her husband to help us, but of course, besides running here and there asking for our missing persons, she couldn't do anything else. I had to stay with my parents and let my house to get some money. The Red Cross Society asked me to help them on the telephone, so I worked and kept myself outside my father's home so as not to go mad. Then I went on a designers' course and, as soon as my daughter could go to a nursery I joined my Company as they reserved a job for me there. (WMPN 12, a 29 year old woman mother of a child of 7).

Too many responsibilities/Too much dependency

My husband was very capable in his own business and in dealing with governmental offices, forms and applications, I concentrated on my work at the hospital, our three children and housework. I was ignorant of all other things. 'Money and politics' I used to tell him - 'do whatever you like with that'. When I lost him, I was lost on these issues as well. I banged my head on the wall and said, 'I have to do everything by myself now'. I take decisions for a lot of things, but there are some problems with the law. I cannot sell a piece of land in the village in my husband's name to educate my first daughter abroad, though she is a brilliant student. (WMPn 23 a 35 year old professional woman with three children).

Fighting formal procedures and obsolete laws

I had to fight through the court and my in-laws' attitudes in order to be able to change my husband's very old car and get a small new one that can take me to work safely. (WMPN 7 a 27 year old housewife, mother of one child).

Thinking of remarriage but not having the courage to face Church and society

If I go as an individual to ask for a divorce my in-laws and my husband's friends will be outraged that I forgot him so easily and that I want a second marriage.....

.....And how will this second husband behave towards me and my children? How will his parents treat me since I am, in crude terms, a 'second hand' woman in their eyes? (WMPn 15).

Photograph 1.2 LIVING IN TENTS

THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



These five women, all refugees, share their lonely days making lace for the market, to get some money. The photograph was taken in 1975 by the Public Information Office.

A 28 year old housewife, mother of one child said:

I am a refugee and I do not have my husband near me. He is a MPn. I was pregnant when he ran to join the forces to throw the enemy into the sea. That is what the Junta Government ordered them to do. The radio let us hope that everything was under control. He was lost. The baby was born without seeing him at all. I had a terrible time at the hospital. My cousins used to come and keep me company. I have my in-laws staying with me in this tent. The only money that I gain myself is from selling this 'Lefcara Lace' that I embroider myself. It helps me a bit to concentrate on this work and talk to my relatives. After a long time this governmental settlement was built and I was given this house. My in-laws are next to me. I look back to these photographs with all of us living in a tent and I admire my patience. At least I have some privacy now. My child has grown up and I am a bit better in my health. I have decided that I should not expect anything to happen, not even help from the Government or the Committee for relatives of MPns. At least I have my child. (WMPn 4).

These verbal and visual images need setting in context. The rest of the thesis can be seen as a series of spirals, alternately opening out from and returning to the problems they signal. In the next chapter I shall describe the event - the 1974 war - which apparently 'caused' so many problems. In Part II I step further back to sketch the foundations of the longer-term historical construction of the social experience and 'normal' identities of Greek-Cypriot women. Then, in Part III I re-focus on these women's particular experiences, illustrated in this chapter. I shall develop the argument that the experiences of the Wives of Missing Persons are exceptional but not abnormal. Indeed, I shall argue that their extreme

aspect in fact reveals what is normally invisible and taken for granted, as Durkheim, for example showed. Also anthropologists e.g. Gluckman., often use 'significant examples' to shed light on the general structure of a society, on behaviour and attitude, and on social norms and identities; the exceptional is part of a continuum - that which is drawn to attention can be used to expose and explain what has been normalised into invisibility and silence. Patriarchal domination, institutionalised and supported by religion and politics - by Church or State - is a major example of a form of power and control normally unmentioned because it is taken for granted, seen as custom, tradition, the law, the way things are. Social crises offer us the chance to see things in a different light.

#### 1.4 The general effect of the war

The previous sections of this chapter have illustrated the experience of WMPNs' and indicated what that experience implies about the position of women in Greek Cypriot society. This illustration and these implications will be filled out and analysed systematically in Part III. Here it is my intention to introduce the impact of the 1974 war itself on the Greek-Cypriot community and, in particular, on Greek-Cypriot women.

The history of Cyprus contains a succession of invasions and occupations by various neighbouring or other dominant nations. The latest and probably most catastrophic event for the island is the Turkish invasion of 1974, a result of international political interests. As Chapter 2 will explain in more detail, Turkey invaded Cyprus on the early morning of July the 20th 1974, declaring:

We came as peacemakers to save the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus (4)

The Turkish expedition started on the Northern coast of the island, entering the district of Kyrenia. This is only forty miles from Turkey, and easily approached by the Turkish forces at night by sea without the Cypriot army or civilians noticing anything and preparing for it. The suddenness of the invasion can be seen from the following two statements from refugee people who fled from the North:

Witness A from T., Kyrenia (5) said:

On the 20th July 1974 at 5.40 am while we were asleep in our house we heard a big explosion. I went out into the yard and saw that about 40 to 50 warships were in the sea off Kyrenia, big and little ones. I saw planes, bombing and shooting...

Witness B, from O., Kyrenia (6) said:

My husband shouted: 'Get up and get the children ready because the sea is full of ships and aeroplanes are coming'. We got out and took shelter under some olive trees and made our way towards a river bed .....

The invasion started on Saturday 20 July 1974 at about 5 am. The ceasefire was only achieved, and then only officially, three days later, on Monday 22 July at 4 pm, although the Security Council of the United Nations took a series of decisions and repeatedly asked for a ceasefire. The first U.N. decision 353 (1974), adopted on the very day of the invasion demanded the immediate termination of foreign intervention in the Republic of Cyprus and called for the withdrawal without delay of the foreign military personnel found in Cyprus, other than those there in accordance with international agreements. In the three days of fighting between two unequal armies the civilian population was killed, raped and enslaved.(7)

Although several neutral armed forces were present on the island, namely the United Nations army (which had been on the island since 1963), and the Greek and British armies, and these were supposed to act as guarantors of peace, none attempted to protect the population against Turkish aggression. Greek Cypriots fled as best they could - on foot, in cars, tractors and any other available vehicle - hoping to get away and survive. Those who managed to do so became the first refugees in the island's long history. But, there were a large number of Greek Cypriots who found themselves trapped by the invading forces, and at the mercy of individual soldiers.

Witnesses from Kyrenia told the Red Cross:

We all stayed in the house from the moment when the bombing and machine-gunning started till about 12 noon when I heard voices calling us in Turkish to come out of the house. Then my family and I went out with our hands up and I saw eight Turkish soldiers who ordered us to get down on our knees and said that they were going to kill us. They all had their guns pointed at us, resting them on us and while we were being taken to the place where we had to kneel down, they kicked us and swore at us. I speak and write the Turkish language fluently and I understood what they were saying.(8)

Here is a statement by a father of two young sons:

...He told them that he was 15 and they let him go. My other son was sitting next to me and when they asked him his age he told them that he was 14. But as he was strongly built they grabbed him and forced him out of the car. As he was leaving he said goodbye father and afterwards I heard him cry from the beating of the Turks. I did not know how many of us were taken down there by the Turks. Later they took us to their police station. The police took care of us, gave us water and treated us in the best possible manner.(9)

And another statement about the brother and wife of the witness:

At 2 am they separated off seven men, all unknown to me, aged between 25 and 30 and took them to the yard, whereupon we heard a burst of automatic fire. After that the Turks returned without the prisoners. In the church yard there was a tractor and a lorry which left immediately after we heard the shots. I realised that the Turks had killed the prisoners and taken them away for burial.

My fellow-villager E.S. told me that the Turks had killed her brother and his wife and Andreas Orphanides aged 60, his wife Chrystalla, aged 55, and their daughter Militza aged 25. The Turks are still holding all the women, including my wife and children, at Voni.



The second round of the fighting started on the 14th August 1974 and brought about the occupation of 40% of Cypriot territory by Turkey.

Thus, in less than a month, forty per cent of the population of the island became homeless. The full statistical picture of the catastrophe is as follows:

200,000 Greek Cypriots, ie 40% of the total Greek Cypriot population became refugees and completely dependent on state aid.

40,000 employed persons (14.5% of the island's labour force) and 25,000 self employed persons (9.1% of the labour force) were left without a job.

40% of Cyprus' land, with all its industrial and economic establishments and their equipment, was occupied by the Turkish invaders. The occupied land comprised: 2/3 of tourist activity; 55-60% of industry; 65% of arable land; 60% of underground water sources; the island's biggest harbour (Famagusta) which handled 83% of total general cargo; the special pier at Karavostasi for the export of 85% of minerals.

Finally the Turkish invasion also cost the island 3,000 dead, 2,192 'missing' and 20,000 enclaved in various places in the north. By the end of June 1975 there was a wave of expulsions of those 20,000 enclaved Greek Cypriots and Maronites who had not managed to escape and stayed in the North.

The Turkish policy was to push the Greek Cypriot population out of the North with only a few hours notice and without allowing the refugees to take with them any of their personal belongings except what would fit into a small bag. Thus of 20,000 enclaved Greek Cypriots in 1974, only 1,266 were in the North in July 1980.

All these displaced persons have been scattered since 1974 all over the southern part of the island. At first they settled temporarily under trees, in small woods, in caravans and unfinished buildings or wherever they could find a roof or were offered a room, desperate as they were after their flight. The pain and the problems were enormous. Furthermore as Chapter 3 describing the historical background to the war, its immediate context and its political implications will show, there is effectively no prospect of the 200,000 dispossessed Greek Cypriots returning to their homes. As refugees they were left not only destitute but without real hope.

Individuals among the Greek Cypriot refugee population began to show social and psychological problems soon after they arrived in the Southern part of the island. The sudden proletarianisation of such a large group inevitably had important consequences for overall Cypriot social patterns including effects on class and family structures which are still being played out. It is not within the scope of this research to discuss the consequences of war as such on all categories of people. I do not, therefore, intend to review the extensive literature on war and refugees throughout the world or even the few articles and books written about the 1974 invasion and Cypriot refugees. (10) The references to facts and figures about the conditions of the refugees between 1974 - 1980 have necessarily been very brief and can be supplemented from these other sources. My concern here, as stated above, is to examine the experience of women, filtering the events of 1974, as a critical case revealing their generalised dependency and oppression as well as the production and reproduction of the power relations which fix and perpetuate that positioning.

In most communities the scattered refugee population became the centre of interest for some months and the contact between the refugee and non-refugee women affected both.

In these and other ways women became politicised in much bigger numbers. By the end of 1980 (see section 5.5) women were represented as members in the main political parties and in some of them (for example AKEL, the communist party, and EDEK, the socialist party), they came to hold junior administrative positions.

In the area of work where women are employees there were serious changes. They were affected more than other employed persons because of the tremendous economic catastrophe that resulted from the war. Many business establishments ceased operating completely either because their factories, buildings and resources were in the occupied areas or because they were hit by bombing, cut off from communication, and so on. All women and men working in them lost their jobs immediately but the women found it more difficult than the men to find a new job, because men were seen as the main 'breadwinners' and were given priority. Many of the remaining businesses had either to dismiss employees or to reduce salaries, or both in order to survive. Women were the first to be dismissed or to accept work at lower rates of pay than men.

Eventually the government (11) intervened and regulated the percentage of reduction in salaries on a uniform basis for all employees but there had already

been a lot of discriminatory practice against women, and against all those who found themselves at a disadvantaged position and had to work. These people were forced by the high unemployment rate caused by the invasion to accept work even under very adverse employment conditions.

(2) The war and women

a) General effects

Two questions concerning the impact of the 1974 war on Greek Cypriot women are particularly important: What were women's specific experiences during the days of the war and what were the implications of wartime and postwar life for Cypriot society and the position of women in it.

The number of dead and MPns as a result of the 1974 war might, in global terms, seem insignificant. However, in relation to the size of the Greek Cypriot community they are very substantial.(12) In terms of the female population over 0.25% were killed in the course of the war, often in a very painful, and horrifying way. A further 0.35% of women of various ages are listed as MPn's. It has been estimated that one out of every 150 married women has a husband missing, while one out of every 100 has a son or

daughter missing. That is to say: out of every 100 Greek- Cypriot women, one will have a husband, brother or child, dead, or missing. Furthermore given the fact that the extended family still exists in Cyprus with all its values and mutual obligations, and that a problem of one of the members becomes, in principle at least, the problem of all, then we can conclude that the majority of Greek-Cypriot women suffered from the war in many ways.

Soon after the war it was calculated that one quarter of the women whose husbands were dead or missing had dependent children, the majority of them living in tents. Deprivation, adverse housing conditions, lack of adequate food, schooling and caring was harder on women especially on older women; they had expected to marry their children off and then retire from paid work possibly to concentrate on bringing up their grandchildren while their daughters continued with full-time employment. Now they found themselves idle in a crowded tent with their daughters' families. The latter were seriously affected by unemployment. Refugee women's reactions to dispossession and dislocation can be compared with those of people suffering from the death of a dearly loved family member. In many cases these women suffered both kinds of bereavement simultaneously.

The precise impact of the 1974 war on women is complicated and involves many factors. First, the extensive disruption brought about by the invasion and dislocation of the population led to rapid social change. Women have been allowed, indeed forced, to involve themselves in activities outside the home. For example, many more women work in the factories while women's participation in political life, such as at demonstrations and other political gatherings, has reached an altogether new level.

Secondly, the hard experience of the war and its consequences, the experience of sudden death or loss of beloved sons, husbands and other close relatives in some degree, shocked women out of their quietism. They suddenly woke up from the peaceful lace-making gatherings and coffee-meetings where conversation had been predominantly about family life and gossip in their own secure domestic atmosphere. Instead, they found themselves refugees in tents and unfinished buildings or worse. Moreover, most of those lucky enough to have kept their homes (i.e. women of the south) had experienced the war through having close relatives dead, lost, wounded, enslaved or made homeless.

This shock politicised women. It raised their consciousness and made them aware that their passivity towards the political problems of the country was positively harmful. As a 65 year old refugee woman at Horio put it:

We left these things (meaning politics, war) to men and we had faith in them. They were our men who talked and talked for hours in the coffee shops about this politician and that, and the English and the Americans and the Turks. We used just to listen and hoped for the best.... (She shakes her head, her voice becomes louder, she is angry and adds:) They made a mess..... We (women) shouldn't leave everything to the men. Men do not give birth and do not care much about killing people. We know, now what is peace and what is war.

A third consequence of the war was the fact that many women lost their husband, - their 'male protector' - putting at least some of them in the position of the 'breadwinner', responsible for handling the family budget and obliged to accept any kind of job to keep their family alive.

Since the law of supply and demand is invariably more pronounced after such crises which tend to produce an excess or shortage of labour, it was inevitable in this case that Cypriot women would find themselves at the mercy of the employers who were keen to minimise expenses and maximise profits in what, in terms of labour, was a buyer's market. Furthermore, as we shall see, the general labour surplus tended to



reinforce the common sense notion that available jobs should go to 'men because they are financially responsible for their families' - a familiar enough expression in 1980s Britain - thereby compounding the disadvantaged position of the single mothers. Thus women might be victimised economically by the war two or three times over.

In the area of education, young women and girls were again the ones to suffer from the serious dislocation that was brought about in education by the invasion. The fact that the financial resources of most families were heavily hit resulted directly in the denial of secondary, higher or university education to the girls of the family. In those few cases where girls struggled through to continue studies they had to do it under very adverse conditions, in a tent with no privacy - not even a quiet corner, - with the economic, social and psychological problems inside and all around them.

b) Specific effects of the war on women

I now want to introduce, though very briefly, categories of Greek Cypriot women who were directly created by the Turkish invasion; namely raped and refugee women, enclaved women and those who 'lost'

their husbands (that is those whose husbands are either dead or still among the missing persons). All of these 'problem women' and their specific situations will be dealt with in detail in chapter 9. Here I will concentrate, first of all on a different category of women, who after those killed during hostilities, have suffered most severely, that is the raped women.

### Raped women

Whereas the other groups are defined by the experience of the war - although of course some enclaved women could be WMPns etc - the experience of rape (and other forms of violence) affected different women irrespective of their defining group at the end of the war. This may be another reason - as well as those I discuss - why the consequences of rape were attended to, for example by allowing abortions.

In Cyprus by the end of the first week of the so called 'first round of the war', the first victims of the invaders had arrived at, or been brought by the Red Cross to Nicosia from Kyrenia. They brought with them their terrifying experiences and described to the Cypriot and international press the brutalities they had suffered. This section gives some information about the rape victims and some quotations from the

allegations prepared for the Council of Europe. In addition to the quotations given here, further quotations are provided in Appendix 2/1.

Rape as a crime during war, as Brownmiller (1975) argues, constitutes a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear, and in doing so, man thus proves his superior strength and power by conquering the territory and raping the women of his enemy while trying to protect his own. Rape was practised during wars of religion and those between individual secular states and it flourishes as an effective military technique irrespective of nationality or geographic location. Despite the fact that it is outlawed as a criminal act under the international rules of war, rape persists. Brownmiller again sets out some of the reasons:

War provides men with the perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women. The very maleness of the military - the brute power of weaponry exclusive to their hands the spiritual bonding of men at arms, the manly discipline of orders given and orders obeyed, the simple logic of the hierarchical command - confirms for men what they long suspect, that women are peripheral, irrelevant to the world that counts, passive spectators to the action in the centre ring. (Brownmiller 1975:32)

The rapists during war are not special known categories of men that can be identified; they are

ordinary men who become different as soon as they put on their military identity. Brownmiller continues:

Victory in arms brings group power undreamed of in civilian life. In the name of victory and the power of the gun, war provides men with a tacit license to rape. In the act and in the excuse, rape in war reveals the male psyche in its boldest form without the veneer of 'chivalry' or 'civilization'. (ibid:34)

The rapes of Chryseis and Briseis during the Trojan War, and the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles show that rape was almost socially acceptable, and at least expected, behaviour which did not leave any stigma on the soldiers involved. Brownmiller quotes many instances from ancient, medieval, and modern times of conquerors raping the women of the defeated army when marching through the conquered territory: rape is considered an actual reward of war and an expression of their victory.

Reference to the ancient story of the Trojan war is apposite not merely because what happened in 1974 might be seen as a kind of latter day revenge. The Greek siege of Troy was significantly itself provoked by abduction of a woman - Paris's abduction of Helen, Menelaus' wife - and the story highlights the positioning of women as male property through marriage which persists throughout Greek Cypriot society today. This positioning of women as male property is, as we will see, manifest in widespread responses of

Greek Cypriot men to the rape of Greek Cypriot women by the Turkish invading army. In the same way invading the land and invading the women became identified as part of a single process. As Brownmiller says:

A male took title to a female, staked a claim to her body... by an act of violence. There was no male-female understanding of a female's right to her bodily integrity. Rape entered the law through the back door, as it were as a property crime of man against man. Woman, of course, was viewed as the property. (my emphases).

(Brownmiller 1975:15)

The victorious Turkish army showed Greek Cypriot men their conquered status of masculine impotence. Their illusions of power and property had become ashes with the vivid proof of victory for the Turkish soldiers. The worst experience for a husband or father of course is to be forced to watch the rape; and it is common to be planned like that by the rapist group of soldiers. In this way, Cypriot men understood the rape of their women as the ultimate humiliation, dispossession, evidence of their defeat. The most interesting and disheartening thing is the rejection of the raped women by their own husband and their own people. (See below page 96) a detailed reference to an appeal through the Greek Cypriot press in Autumn 1974 by the Committee of enclaved people in which they plea for the raped women to be accepted back by their husbands and families). "You all have some basic

duties towards these women. It is not their fault. You should revise your decision" the committee urges the men. I will quote Brownmiller again; she refers to a similar reaction of Bangladeshi men:

In war as in peace, the husbands of raped women place a major burden of blame for the awful event on their wives. The hallowed rights of property have been abused, and the property herself is held culpable.(ibid:25)

A rabbi from the Kovno ghetto in Lithuania wrote after World War 2 against those husbands who held their raped wives culpable:

It is our duty to proclaim the reward they (the raped women) will receive for their suffering. We must avoid causing them any unnecessary anguish. Certainly husbands who have divorced their wives under similar circumstances have acted reprehensibly.

Another important issue to be mentioned from the experience of Cyprus is the fact that raping took place primarily during the first round of fighting and after that it was used as a successful propaganda tool to drive the population away from the areas that according to the military plans were to be occupied by Turkish soldiers and resettled by Turkish imported families. Emotionally and psychosexually the Greek Cypriot population was discouraged from attempting to stay in the areas occupied by the Turkish army. Men lost their nerve by hearing about raped women and imagining what might happen to their wives, daughters or sisters. Those defenceless Cypriot women of various ages who were raped in most cases at gunpoint

made their statements in confidentiality as soon as they arrived at the international Red Cross and all the excerpts that follow come from these sources.

The first to suffer were the women of Trimithi, Karmi and Ayios Georgios, three farming communities west of the holiday town of Kyrenia which lay directly in the path of the Turkish army.

The United Nations forces and the Red Cross have helped in delivering these women to the Cypriot Government in the south where they were given medical treatment.

The statements were usually given a few days after the witnesses were released from the northern part of Cyprus and were delivered to the Red Cross. The English texts of their statements were used by the United Nations and the International Red Cross with an explanatory paragraph which I quote here:

Here are simple words, living expressions of a harrowing experience retaining all the idiomatic characteristics of each speaker, describing not facts, but states of mind... Here are men watching their wives and daughters being dragged into a ditch and raped by Turkish soldiers in endless succession... Here are young girls trying to convey, and at the same time to conceal in their faltering sentences the unbearable memories that keep unfolding before their frightened eyes. (1978:4)

A 20 year old girl speaks:

I saw him (a Turkish soldier) still over me and I noticed some others showing that they approved of

what he had done to me... He then took away my watch and my engagement ring. Immediately afterwards somebody else threw me on the ground and started to undress me with the same intention as the previous one... I proceeded in the direction that the other women walked and I caught up with them. I then saw a 2 year old boy whom, in spite of the fact that I was losing my strength I took in my arms hoping that it was going to save my life. While I was holding the boy some Turks surrounded us again. One of them started pulling me... Walking towards Six Mile Beach we found charcoal and I used it to make my face black in order to look old, hoping to avoid another rape. (ibid:14)

According to the report of the European Commission of Human Rights - Council of Europe July the 10th 1976 "the evidence concerning allegations of rape is voluminous."

The applicant Government (Cyprus vs Turkey) complained of wholesale and repeated rapes of women of all ages from 12 to 71, sometimes to such an extent that the victims suffered hemorrhages or became mental wrecks. In some areas, enforced prostitution was practised, all women and girls of a village being collected and put into separate rooms in empty houses, where they were raped repeatedly by the Turkish troops. "In certain cases members of the same family were repeatedly raped, some of them in front of their own children. In other cases women were brutally raped in public. Rapes were on many occasions accompanied by brutalities such as violent biting of the victims to the extent of severe wounding, hitting their heads on the floor and wringing their throats almost to the point of suffocation. In some cases attempts to rape were followed by the stabbing or killing of the victim. Victims of rape included pregnant and mentally retarded women. (1976:121)

A number of Greek Cypriot women went through these dreadful experiences and those who managed to survive, especially those who did not become pregnant, hid



their 'painful secret' deep in themselves and started life, a supposedly new life scattered all over the free part of the island. It has been very difficult for this researcher to trace these women who have been raped firstly because although the press commented extensively on the issue, names, numbers or detailed descriptions were never mentioned, and wisely so. The interest of the press in fact brought to the surface the untouched issue of Cypriot women and sexuality in the context of pre and post-war Cypriot norms and values. The well known and widely discussed cultural code of honour and shame was an obsession among the Cypriot male population. In conversation and public debate as well as through the press Greek Cypriot males expressed their extreme worries about the fact of rape, the fact of enemy blood in 'their women' the implicit worry being the impurity of 'their nation'. They should not allow such children to be born; the abortion law was changed overnight and the rape-victims were provided with abortions through the Red Cross and the health authorities of the English bases. As the Report of the European Commission says:

...a girl of 15 years who had been raped was delivered to the Red Cross:

the witness had to take care of 38 women released from the Voni and Gypsou Camps all of whom had been raped, some of them in front of their husbands and their children; others had been raped repeatedly, or put in houses frequented by Turkish soldiers. The women were taken to

Akrotiri hospital in the sovereign base where they were treated. Three of them were found to be pregnant. (1976:123)

In terms of numbers the European Commission took into account written statements of "41 alleged victims of rape, of four alleged eye-witnesses of rape of 24 hearsay witnesses of rape" (ibid). Some of these defenceless women and young girls who were raped at gunpoint made their statements as soon as they arrived at the hands of the Red Cross, 'trying to convey and at the same time conceal, in their faltering sentences' the unbearable memories that kept unfolding before them.

There was more suffering to come. In November 1974 the press in Nicosia reported for the first time that rape victims were facing more problems since some of their husbands and fiancées had applied to the Church for divorce. These first reports created public discussions. Some articles or letters by the public in the newspapers supported the men, husbands and fiancées who, as reported, could not accept their wives any more. 'They just do not want them', or 'It's not easy for a man to be attracted to his wife again if he knows what has happened'. Most people 'understood' the men and excused them. The Pancyprian Committee for the enclaved wrote an article in the press supporting the raped women and reminding the

Cypriot society that these women "did nothing to be blamed". The press commented on this appeal with the following:

THEY REFUSE TO ACCEPT THEIR WIVES

Serious social problems are coming up to the surface now resulting from the invasion and rape of Greek Cypriot women. A small number of husbands or fiancées refuse to accept their wives released from the North now and some proceeded for a divorce. On this subject the Pancyprian Committee for Enclaved people sent this appeal to the press yesterday.

The Pancyprian Committee for the Enclaved has been informed about instances where husbands of released raped women refuse to accept them back and ask for a divorce for having been raped by the Turkish invading forces. We urge them to reconsider their decision. Our compatriot women did nothing to be blamed. We must see them as victims of the invasion.

The Church was involved in the whole issue since it was the only institution legally capable of granting divorce. Even in the cases of engaged couples where the priest blessed the rings and signed the dowry contract approval of non-marriage had to be sought through the Church since vows had been exchanged and the engagement blessed by a church ceremony.

Refugee women

As discussed later (in chapter 4) one of the important values of the Cypriot social formation that relates directly to family life and women is the dowry system which means that in most cases a wife brings a house

and/or land with her when she marries. All the Cypriot women who have been reduced to the status of refugees have lost their homes and with it everything they identified themselves with in the days before the invasion. As Loizos (1981:199) puts it: 'Even if refugees have fled from the threat of death or persecution, they have usually left homes - and left familiar patterns of meanings'. These 'familiar patterns of meaning' lost behind the Green Line in the Turkish occupied area were the most important reasons for most refugee women feeling lost. Loizos goes on:

Where refugees have become so without warning, they will generally need at least a year to come to terms with their new situations and some will require several years. During this time restlessness, apathy, indecisiveness, or even a sense of unreality may occur. (1981:120)

Most rural refugee women experienced both material and symbolic deprivation since they have also lost their land, bequeathed to them by their fathers, on which they had worked for years planting citrus trees and vineyards and making fertile by their own labour.

In short all the material world they were acquainted with and which was theirs had been taken away overnight. Their flight from the bombing and fighting was so sudden that none of them was able to take any of their most precious movable belongings. In addition there remains the adjustment to the new

social surroundings, the new world they find themselves in, be it in a rural or urban setting, the new people in the neighbourhood or the refugee camp.

The abrupt change of social surroundings is accompanied by an abrupt change in living conditions. Now the family lives under primitive living conditions which no Cyprus family had experienced in the past, regardless of its position. In most cases the head of the family is without a job and this means that the family is absolutely dependent on the aid of the state for its maintenance. The wife has to make ends meet with the small allowance paid to the family and their needs are many and various and they cannot be met in this way to the full. And naturally all complaints in the family are directed towards the mother.

(My emphasis) Nikita 1975:17.

When I started my fieldwork in 1979, no one had looked at the experience of refugee women in particular. No full scale research among them has taken place. Having set myself a broader task than just the refugee women, my intention is to tackle some questions here and expand a little on this issue in chapter 9 . The main questions that occupied me concerning this group of women were: did the refugee woman manage to keep the household unit, did she maintain her feeling of responsibility towards her family? How did she cope with the double roles she had been forced to undertake? What about conflicts between her old and new roles? No empirical work addressing the above questions had been published by 1979 when this research started.

Enclaved women

These are all those women who, in August 1974 when the 'Attila plan' (13) and operation was completed, were cut off in the occupied areas. Some of them had all or most of the members of their families with them, others had lost husbands or sons, and others, especially those whose husbands were in the army, did not and in many cases still do not know whether their husbands were dead or alive, and had to cope with their acute distress as well as their children, old parents and the occupation army.

There are no data - direct observation etc. No research could be done in the circumstances on the degree of social degradation which must have characterised life under occupation. The restrictions that the occupation forces imposed on the enclaved, deprived these women of the benefit of free communication, and the sharing of experiences and the consequences and wounds of the war. They lacked the social solidarity which acted as a healer in many cases on the women who managed to flee to safety in the South. The enclaved women in the North experienced similar sufferings to those in the South but without that element of social and spiritual communion with the social whole which is an indispensable factor for psychological survival.

Women who lost their husbands because of the war:

Two groups of women belong to this category. The first one is the group of women who had lived for five years until the time of my fieldwork in a limbo state of neither wives in practice nor officially widows, since their husbands are considered Missing Persons since August 1974.

The second group are the war widows who are facing in some ways similar social pressures and practical problems while in other ways one might say they are 'better off' compared with the 'false widows' since they know their husbands are dead and their life is more or less in their own hands.

The number of married men who died amounts to 6,000 (military and civilians). Their wives comprise the group of war widows as distinct from the wives of WMPns. The reason for this distinction is the fact that because they know that their husbands died they suffered intense pain at the time of the announcement of their death, and have taken the decision that 'what is gone is gone'. The loss was too much to take at the beginning but they have accepted it and some of them, the young widows, have already remarried. (In Chapter 9 I refer in more detail to the experiences of one of these war widows.)

Generally speaking their problems of loneliness, childcare and breadwinner's responsibilities are similar to those of other single mothers. What they have in their favour is the fact that the state and the society have sympathy for their condition and have come forward with actual financial support through the scheme for widows pensions. They are in a better position than wives of WMPns because in legal terms they have the right to administer their joint property.

They are also in a much better position than any divorced or separated women because their singleness is not considered their own fault. Their husbands are heroes and they thus enjoy some prestige and sympathy. This, needless to say, is still dependent on the status of their (now dead) husbands.

#### Wives of Missing Persons or 'false' widows

The problems of WMPn's have already been introduced and illustrated earlier. Here I will restrict myself to some additional details.

In July 1979, five and a half years after the Turkish invasion, the fate of 2,190 Greek Cypriots (0.5% of the population of the island) remained unknown. There exists irrefutable evidence (according to governmental and international sources) proving that these persons



were captured by the Turkish invading forces not only during, but also after the cessation of hostilities. The official attitude of the Turkish authorities is that no Greek Cypriot is detained as an "undeclared prisoner of war and that they have given back all the declared prisoners". The Turkish side refused at that time to allow investigation by the Red Cross or United Nations Forces. Various initiatives were repulsed by them between 1974 and 1979, the latest of which expressed its regret for the non-implementation of its two previous resolutions and urged the immediate establishment of the Investigations Body which would be in a position to function impartially, effectively and speedily. On May 10th and 19th 1979 talks between the two interested parties with the mediation of the Secretary General of the United Nations ended with a Report which states that one of the Parties was not prepared to appoint representatives to the Investigatory Body. The talks came to a stand-still and the thousands of relatives of Missing Persons still live with the agony: 'Are they dead or alive? Where are they held?'

Leaving these agonising questions unanswered I will turn now to the historical and socioeconomic background that led the country to the event described above.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

1. My informant speaks in the first person. During the interview she used the Cypriot dialect; she spoke spontaneously and let her feelings pour out but also used a critical attitude towards her situation and the events that led to it. In the process of transcription and translation the Cypriot dialect lost its originality and vitality, partly its dynamic. But this was inevitable.
2. This informant seemed to be a very tidy housewife because her refugee home, under the difficult situation in which she was living, seemed very well cared for. Her levkara lace, a kind of embroidery that she was very good at, was nicely spread over her few pieces of furniture.
3. The "Green Line", which divides the Turkish from the Greek quarters of Nicosia, is a very dangerous area near which to work, because soldiers from the two opposite armies exchange fire without warning.
4. This statement was officially made by the Turkish Government and was reported in the International press in July 1974.
5. This description of the first few hours of the invasion was vivid in most of my informants stories.
6. Cyprus Witness (1976:21) published by the Panhellenic Committee for solidarity with Cyprus-PESK- Athens 1976. See also Appendix 1 for more extracts from the book.
7. 'Enclaved' is an English coinage used by Cypriot official sources to render the Greek word "englovismenos" - that is, totally surrounded by and trapped in Turkish territory.
8. Cyprus witness, ibid:22.
9. ibid:25
10. The bibliography on refugees is quite extensive but although I covered most of it I have no space here to discuss it.
11. Republic of Cyprus Publication, 1979.
12. See Hunt Sir D. 1982, Attalides 1979 and Loizos 1981.
13. The plan for the invasion<sup>a</sup> of Cyprus by Turkey was known as "the Attila Plan" a historical reference to the name of an ancestor of the Turkish speaking population.

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## PART II HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF THE PROBLEM

This part of the thesis contains the relevant sociohistorical information, which will contextualise and clarify the main problem with which this research deals. It contains three chapters:

Chapter 2 provides some historical material on Cyprus and the Cypriot state for the period covered by this research. It is also concerned with an overview of the socioeconomic background.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the Cypriot Orthodox Church.

Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the dowry system as a legal institution, its relationship with patriarchal ideology and its effect on women's identity.

## CHAPTER 2. THE SOCIOHISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 A brief political history of Cyprus

- a) Before 1960
- b) Between 1960 - 1979

### 2.2 Internal political power structures

- a) The national level: Cypriot state institutions after 1960
  - (i) Constitution and the government
  - (ii) System of law and justice
  - (iii) Education
  - (iv) Employment
  - (v) Health
- b) The Church as a powerful social-political institution
  - (i) The influence of the Church in the political sphere
  - (ii) The influence of the Church in the educational sphere
- c) Political Parties
- d) Organisation of the local level
- e) The smallest political unit: Family and Kinship

### 2.3 The socioeconomic structure of Cyprus

- a) Climate, agriculture, trade, industry, emigration.
- b) Key divisions within Cypriot society and their relevance to Greek Cypriot women's lives: class and gender.
- c) Rural change and development.

## CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIOHISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 A brief political history of Cyprus

#### a) Before 1960

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean with a territory of 3,572 square miles. It is situated at the eastern end of the east-Mediterranean basin 240 miles north of Egypt, 64 miles west of Syria and only 44 miles south of Turkey. The Greek mainland is some 500 miles to the west. According to the last official census (April 1976), the island had 634,000 inhabitants: 77% were Greek Cypriots, 18.3% Turkish Cypriots and 4.7% were other minorities (Maronites, Armenians, Latins, etc.) Since 1960 Cyprus has been an independent Republic with a presidential system of government.

This island lies at the crossroads of the three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. Because of this important geographical position has attracted the interest and ambitions of many imperialist powers from antiquity to the present day. It could even be

claimed that Cyprus has always been linked to international geopolitics. As P.Sant Cassia (1981) said:

The Venetians occupied it as a staging post for trade, the Ottomans for grain, and the British to control the sea route to India.

The history of Cyprus has largely been determined by these external powers; the island became an international problem, and has played a major role in the political life of the eastern Mediterranean. It is only against the background of this longer history that the 'intercommunal' relations and conflicts of the island can be understood.

The prehistory of the island extends as far back as the beginning of the 6th millenium B.C. Early in the 2nd millenium B.C. the Achaeans established city kingdoms in the island and introduced the Greek language, religion and way of life. The island's wealth, which derived from its copper mines and forests, made Cyprus the object of contest among the great powers of antiquity; Assyrians, Egyptians, and Persians successively became masters of the island. Alexander the Great expelled the Persians from the island and restored the Cypriot kings to their kingdoms; but after his death the island came under the domination of the Ptolemies and eventually, in 58 B.C., under that of the Romans.



From 330 A.D. Cyprus, as part of the Byzantine east, shared the fortunes of the Greek Orthodox world. Richard the Lionheart of England, the Knights<sup>4</sup> Templar, the Lusignans, and the Republic of Venice, succeeded one another as conquerors of the island until 1571 when it was taken by the Ottoman Turks, the ancestors of today's Turkish Cypriot population. The Turkish period lasted until 1878 when fears of Russian expansionism led the Sultan to hand over the administration of Cyprus to Great Britain in exchange for a promise of help in the event of an attack by Russia.

Britain administered Cyprus in the name of the Sultan until 1914 when, on the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the Great War on the side of the Central Powers, Cyprus was annexed by Britain. In 1925 Cyprus was finally declared a Crown colony; British rule thus lasted for a total of 82 years from 1878 to 1960. These years were not always peaceful and prosperous for the islanders, although some progress was achieved.

By the 1950s Greek Cypriot leaders were disappointed because of the failures of their continuous petitions for 'Enosis' - Unification with Greece. They felt that Greek Cypriots were not being satisfactorily

rewarded for their contribution, in men and moral support, to the allies during the Second World War and they decided that armed struggle was their only chance to unite Cyprus with Greece. The Turkish Cypriots had long ago been 'awakened' and effectively opposed 'Enosis'. Britain, Greece and Turkey took over the vital negotiations and enforced their decisions on the Cypriot representatives. In February 1959 in Zurich, and later on in the same month in London, the agreed result, the formation of an independent Republic, was signed and the Greek, Turkish and British governments entered into a Treaty of Guarantee to maintain this settlement.

b) Between 1960 and 1979

In July 1960 general elections were held in Cyprus for the House of Representatives. On the 16th of August 1960 the new Cyprus flag was raised proclaiming that the island had become an independent Republic with a Greek Cypriot president after 470 years of foreign rule. Under the Constitution the President of the Republic is elected by universal suffrage for a 5 year term of office. The first president was Archbishop Makarios who was elected to this office with 67% of the Greek Cypriot vote cast. He remained the

President of the Republic and the 'Ethnarch' of the Greek Cypriots, that is their national leader, until 1977 when he died from a heart attack. According to the Constitution the Vice-President must be a Turkish Cypriot and Dr Fazil Kuchuck was elected as the first Vice-President of the Republic.

The Constitution of the newly established Republic guaranteed the veto of the Turkish minority on tax laws and also provided for separate Greek and Turkish municipalities. Stavrinides (1976) characterized it as a 'Separatist Constitution' since those who framed it had accepted, as he puts it:

....the separate existence of the two communities, with different national and cultural traditions and competing interests and as a 'given' and immutable factor and proceeded to erect a constitutional edifice on the assumption that the two communities would have to develop in future as separate entities (1976:53)

Also, Polyviou maintained that:

The 1960 Constitution..... is weighted down by checks and balances, procedural and substantive guarantees and prohibitions. Constitutionalism had, indeed, run riot in harness with communalism. It is hardly surprising that the application of the rigid provisions of these unique constitutional arrangements proved unworkable. (1974 pp 6-7)

Within three years, in December 1963, violent intercommunal conflict started. This resulted in the

first attempt to separate the two communities geographically. Turkish Cypriots in considerable numbers barricaded themselves in armed enclaves. This gathering into compact areas facilitated the growth of national organisations supported by the religious institutions on both the Greek and Turkish sides. In the years following 1963 nationalism was growing, especially among the young people of both communities. Co-existence and co-operation could not develop out of biased history books and speeches by political and religious leaders. After the intercommunal fighting in December 1963, the Turkish community created a system of political, administrative, judicial, social and other institutions and acted as a 'state' called after December 1967, 'The Turkish Cypriot Administration'. Dr Kutchuck was the head of this administration until February 1973 when Mr Rauf Denktash succeeded him.

The administration of the official state was left completely in Greek hands and this government, 'The Makarios government', was recognised by foreign countries and International Organisations as the only representative government of the Cypriot Republic. A considerable number of the Turkish population stayed in the Greek-controlled area and were administered by this government. They also gave allegiance to those institutions that operated in the Turkish areas.

The Greek and Turkish Cypriot armies fought each other sporadically from 1963 until November 1967 when there was a serious emergency and an ultimatum from Ankara went to Athens. Greece was at that time ruled by the Junta government which seized power in April 1967 and subtly acted after that date against the interests of the Greek Cypriots in various ways. Grivas, the leader of the EOKA A' (1) guerilla fighters and later a symbol of the Enosis movement, was withdrawn, Makarios was accused of having forgotten Enosis and anti-Makarios groups were helped by various means. Criticism of the President's 'political line' grew more vocal when Grivas returned to Cyprus secretly in 1971 and created the Second National organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA B) Even the three Bishops opposed Makarios and adopted the extreme Nationalist position. (2)

The political situation deteriorated, especially after 1971 when the junta government in Athens and its officers in Cyprus commanding the Cypriot National Guard became openly more supportive of the Enosis movement. The climax came on the 15th July 1974 when troops of the National Guard led by Greek officers attacked the Presidential Palace with the intention of killing Makarios and solving the Cyprus problem.

In previous centuries occupation took the usual military form of open attacks and invasions. In the twentieth century, it seems, the occupation of Cyprus was to be initiated from inside, on the pretext of a coup and intercommunal conflict, while the 'Super Powers' remained behind the scenes in order to be able to move the puppets in the desired directions. The coup of 1974 was considered by historians and commentators on the Cypriot problem (3) as a well prepared and methodically executed plan of the C.I.A. and other interested parties to divide the island into North and South, Turkish and Greek parts.

The partition plans were furthered and Turkey, using the coup of the 15th as a pretext, sent her Air force, Navy and Army to invade Cyprus on July 20th, allegedly to guarantee the island's independence declaring:

We came as peacemakers to save the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus. (4)

Turkey invaded Cyprus on Saturday July 20th; fighting lasted until Monday, July 22nd, when the United Nations and interested parties agreed to a ceasefire.

This first stage of fighting ended with 4% of the land in Turkish hands and 40,000 Turkish soldiers from the mainland on the island.

On August 14th, the second stage of fighting started, resulting in 36% of the island's territory falling under Turkish occupation.

The achievement of Turkey's alleged aim ('we came as peacemakers') was not followed up by a withdrawal of her forces when President Makarios returned to the island and was restored to his position as President of the Republic in December 1974.

Repeated U.N. resolutions called for respect for the island's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and the withdrawal of all foreign troops, but were utterly disregarded by the relevant powers.

In 1980 when I carried out my fieldwork the island was still divided into North and South, Turkish and Greek parts, and four armies were based there: The British at the British bases, the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot in the North, the Greek and Greek Cypriot in the South, and the United Nations army in between - on the 'Green Line'. The demographic and historic character of Cyprus has been changing since 1974 with continuing efforts on the Turkish side to import population from Turkey, thereby furthering her partition plans. (5)

## 2.2 Internal political power structures

With the declaration of the Independence of the island in 1960 came the formation of the Republic of Cyprus with its first government and internal structures. This section will describe the existing structures and how they developed.

At the national level, I will refer to state institutions and the legal structure. Education, employment and health will be dealt with in brief. A reference to political parties will follow and the Church will be dealt with here very briefly since a whole chapter is devoted to its history and position in the Cypriot Power structure.

I will also discuss in summary, the nature of local government which is relevant to the discussion in Chapter 8 when Horio is analysed.

I will offer a brief reference to key divisions within Greek Cypriot society and I will attempt to bring the reader down to the family.



(a) The national level: Cypriot state institutions  
after 1960

(i) Constitution and the government

Under the 1960 Constitution the Cypriot state was to have a Greek president and a Turkish vice-president. The president is elected for a five year term of office. He is vested with the executive power and assisted by a cabinet of Ministers appointed by him. This cabinet is the main organ for exercising the executive power of the Cypriot Republic. Each Minister heads his own Ministry, exercises power on all subjects falling within the domain of his authority and is answerable to the President of the Republic. (6)

The legislative power of the Republic is exercised by the House of Representatives which consists of fifty members elected by universal suffrage, again for a five year term of office. Thirty five of these are Greek Cypriots while fifteen are Turkish Cypriots, all elected by their respective communities according to the relevant regulations of the 1960 Constitution. According to the Constitution (Article 129), the

Cypriot state, was to have a National Guard consisting of 1,200 Greek Cypriots and 800 Turkish Cypriots. Also two representative armies were to come to the island from Greece and Turkey, to join the British army which has concentrated in the British bases of Akroteri (Limassol district) and Dekelia (Larnaca district). All three armies were present on the island to guarantee peace, the integrity of the newly established state and the avoidance of conflict among the two communities. There is no national Air force or Navy.

There are also independent offices of the Republic which do not come under any Ministry, namely:

1. The Audit of the Republic
2. The Public Service Commission
3. The Educational Commission
4. The Office of the Attorney General

Of these four Independent offices I give here more details about the Public Service Commission and the Educational Commission, both of them being very important in terms of exercising disciplinary control over civil servants and others. The Public Service Commission has a chairman and five members, all

appointed by the President of the Republic for a six year term. They promote, transfer, second, retire, discipline, dismiss or remove from office, appoint or confirm appointments of public officers. The Educational Service Commission deals similarly with the educationists serving in public schools and institutions at all levels.

Justice is administered by a separate and independent Judiciary exercising its power through the following judicial institutions:

1. The Supreme court of the Republic, composed of 5 - 7 judges, one of whom is the President of the Court. All matters of constitutional law, as well as matters in relation to resources for the annulment of administrative acts, decisions or omissions are adjudicated exclusively and finally by this Supreme Court as the highest appellate Court in the Republic.
2. The Assize Court, which exercises unlimited criminal jurisdiction.
3. The District Courts - one for each district - which exercise original civil and criminal jurisdiction.

4. The Ecclesiastical Courts.
5. The Turkish Family Courts which deal only with Turkish Cypriot family law.

I will deal with the Ecclesiastical Courts, their history, tradition and power, in Chapter 3, which is devoted to the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Here I will give some information about the secular system of Law and Justice. I include in this survey of Cypriot secular law, the range of constitutional and legal rights of relevance to this thesis. Most Cypriot secular law (both civil and criminal) originated from secular Cypriot traditions as well as from foreign influences, the main one of which has been British as a result of the general application of British law in Cyprus during the British occupation between 1878 - 1960.

(ii) System of Law and Justice

The age of majority in Cyprus is 18. Upon attaining this age a person sheds all legal incapacities. He or she can sue and be sued in their own name and can enter into a contract. Article 26 (i) of the Constitution provides that:

Every person has the right to enter freely into any contract subject to such conditions,

limitations or restrictions as are laid down by the general principles of the law of contract.

There are two areas, in the law concerning agency, which presume a stronger contractual capacity for men than for women. These are first the 'agency of necessity' under which a married woman is legally empowered to pledge the husband's credit for the necessities of life, commensurate with their normal standard of living. A married woman has this power when she is separated from her husband and prior to a court order of maintenance. Secondly the 'Presumed Agency' gives a woman, upon cohabitation with a man, the power to bind her husband or cohabitee to a contract for necessities which are commensurate with their current life.

With the coming into operation of the Cyprus Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, as stated in Article 172, equality between men and women before the law, the administration and justice became a formal legal reality. Article 28 of the Constitution provides that:

1. All persons are equal before the law, the administration and justice and are entitled to equal protection thereof and treatment thereby.
2. Every person shall enjoy all the rights and liberties provided for in this Constitution without any direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the ground of his community, race, religion,

language, sex, political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, colour, wealth, social class, or any ground whatsoever, unless there is express provision to the contrary in this Constitution. (Article 28)

Despite this Article of the Constitution, patriarchal power is legally supported. Contradictions are thus inscribed in the supreme legal document of the country. For example, paragraph 7 of Article 2 legalises discrimination and reinforces the patriarchal family by stating that:

- a) A married woman shall belong to the community to which her husband belongs.
- b) A male or female child under the age of 21 who is not married shall belong to the community to which his or her father belongs or if the father is unknown and he or she has not been adopted, to the community to which his or her mother belongs.  
(Article 2 (7))

Other discriminatory provisions of the Constitution include the fact that women are prohibited from being employed at night in industrial enterprises and in the underground galleries of mines.

Although equality is posited between men and women in the Constitution, there are no laws prohibiting discrimination. This allows the practice of law to remain customarily weighted in favour of the male. It

also allows employers to discriminate against women in pay, conditions of work, promotion and employment offered. Some evidence of this is provided in the statistics and text of Chapter 5 and the oral evidence in the rest of Part III below.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned here that Cyprus has ratified various International Conventions on Human Rights; these guarantee equality in law between a man and a woman. And in accordance with article 169 of the Constitution such treaties, once ratified by the Republic, become parts of the Municipal Law and, indeed, have superior force over it.

Cypriot women were granted the right to vote in 1960, on the establishment of the Republic. Article 31 of the Constitution gives the right to all citizens of the Republic who have attained the age of 21 to vote. Also Article 63, section 1 provides that:

Subject to paragraph 2 of this Article every citizen of the Republic who has attained the age of twenty-one years and has such residential qualifications as may be prescribed by the Electoral Law shall have the right to be registered as an elector in either the Greek or Turkish electoral list. (Article 63:118)

Greek Cypriot women - as sane citizens - have also the right to be elected either as President or as a member of the House of Representatives of the Republic. (Article 40 and 64)

Women as citizens have a right of access to public service employment (public service law 33/1967). More generally the Constitution states:

Every person has the right to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. (Article 25 Section (i))

The right to marry is guaranteed by Article 22 (i) of the Constitution which provides that:

Any person reaching nubile age is free to marry and found a family according to the law relating to marriage, applicable to such person under the provisions of this Constitution.

Canon law specified nubile age as 12 for women and 14 for men until 1935 when the minimum age became 16 years for both sexes with a maximum age of 60 for women and 70 for men. Here is a clear example of how key secular constitutional terms are in practice defined by canon law, which also deals with other legal aspects of marriage (as we see in detail in the following chapter).

In this context I should mention that in accordance with the provisions of the Consitution different laws are in force for the different religious groups in



Cyprus for matters regarding bethrothal, marriage, divorce, nullity rights or family relations other than legitimation by order of the court or adoption of members of the Greek-Orthodox Church or of a religious group in Cyprus other than Turkish Cypriot or other Muslims. Certain rights recognised by the Constitution are exercised separately by the two communities defined therein, ie. the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities. The president of the Republic must be a Greek Cypriot elected by the Greek Community only and the Vice-President must be a Turkish Cypriot elected by the Turkish community. Seventy per cent of the members in the House of Representatives are elected by the Greek Community and thirty per cent by the Turkish community separately from amongst their members respectively. (Article 62 (2) of the Constitution).

There is no legislative provision in Cyprus which regulates the name the parties in a marriage should assume. The practice however, as customary throughout the Christian world, is that upon marriage a woman takes her husband's family name. Also the children take their father's family name except in the case of illegitimate children, who take their mother's name.

Upon marriage a woman acquires the 'residence' of her husband as well as his 'domicile'. Thus if an alien woman is married to a Cypriot she automatically acquires his residence as well as his domicile. The community to which a person belongs in Cyprus is important in several respects. The 'resident' status of a person determines matters such as estate duty and the right to live in Cyprus.

An alien woman who marries a Cypriot does not automatically acquire citizenship although she has the right to do so. However, if an alien man marries a Cypriot woman he can acquire Cypriot citizenship only if he fulfils almost all the conditions that any alien must fulfil in order to acquire Cypriot citizenship. The children take their father's citizenship except in the case of illegitimate children or where the father is stateless, whereupon they take the mother's citizenship.

The overall pattern of law (rules, regulations and courts) applicable to Greek Cypriots is complex. There is first a division of powers between Church and State, canon and secular law. There is, secondly, a difference between the legal rights enshrined in such documents as the Constitution and those contained in international rights legislation encoded into Cypriot

law and actual local practices. Equally important is the way all law makes a claim beyond the actual body of the legal texts and institutions. In Cyprus, law either forms part of what is 'proper' and/or 'natural' because it is justified by religion, involving the reproduction of powerlessness especially in women or it is seen as rationalised common sense, as the 'law of the land', as the law of the Republic. In both cases the law is bound up with being a Greek Cypriot. In claiming to be an authentic expression of Greek Cypriotness the law gains enormous majesty and power.

The secular family law imposes the duty on a husband to maintain his wife. Thus in cases of divorce if a husband fails to provide reasonable alimony the wife may apply to the courts for the issue of an order asking the husband to make periodical payments for this purpose. A wife has no similar obligation. But a wife's rights are more limited with regard to guardianship. Patriarchal attitudes and influences are mainly reflected in this Guardianship of Infants and Prodigals Law (Cap 277) which states that the lawful father shall be the guardian of children under the age of 18 and only if there is no lawful father either through death or otherwise, is the mother the legal guardian. In addition the Wills and Successions Law (Cap 195) states that legal children have as their domicile of origin the father's home.

Article 23 (i) of the Constitution provides that

Every person, alone or jointly with others, has the right to acquire, own, possess, enjoy or dispose of any movable or immovable property and has the right to respect for such right.

A married woman has full proprietary rights and she has the capacity to sue in order to protect the property she possesses. Until recently a wife's unearned income derived from her property was added to her husband's income for tax purposes. Only a wife's earned income was taxed separately. Recently however it was decided that the spouse's income, whether earned or unearned, should be taxed separately. (7) A wife has equal entitlement to her husband, in suing for certain civil rights necessary to protect her proprietary rights.

(iii) Education

The right to Education is guaranteed for all persons without any discrimination. (Article 11(5)) of the 1960 Constitution.

In Cyprus today education is free and compulsory from the age of five years and five months up to the end of a six-year primary course or when the student reaches the age of thirteen, whichever comes first. Free

education is also offered in the early years of the general secondary course and is now expanding into the pre-primary level. The invasion seriously affected this sector of the social services. During the years immediately after the 1974 war, pupils and teachers of all three sectors, Primary, Secondary and Further Education had to undergo sacrifices and work under difficult conditions. Section 5.3 and Appendix 5 of chapter five gives statistics and a more detailed analysis of the educational standards of the Greek community of the Republic. According to the provisions of the Constitution the education of the Turkish community has been in the hands of the Turkish Communal chamber since the birth of the Republic.

(iv) Employment

Cyprus has a dependent capitalist formation; its economic and social patterns reflect this. It is a predominantly agricultural country influenced by mechanisation and international economic conditions. An important consequence of the formation of the Republic and the activation of the Cyprus economy was the fact that conditions of full employment were attained and emigration, which in the 1950s was very high, ceased by the middle of the 1960s. The exports of the country diversified and expanded. After 1960,

according to most international and governmental statistics, rapid economic and social progress was experienced in Cyprus as a whole. Parts of the population moved up the economic ladder very rapidly with all the other social consequences that such a change entails. As governmental statistics show, the rate of growth of the National Income was amongst the highest in the world:

'Heavy infrastructural investments were carried out all over the island and the productive capacity of the economy in all sectors was strengthened, modernised and expanded. (Cyprus in brief 1980:30, P I O)

Three sectors of the economy, agriculture, tourism and light industry developed at a spectacular pace. In the 1960s and early 1970s there was a steady influx of foreign capital which maintained the exchange rates at a comparatively high level. The invasion of 1974 not only brought an abrupt halt to this progress but created real problems of survival for the Cypriot population of both communities. The area now occupied, according to data gathered in 1972, accounted for almost 70% of the total economic resources; the loss in exports amounted to around 75% of the total. In the South, the Cypriot government implemented emergency Economic Action plans asking for active participation and sacrifices from all sectors of the population especially the public sector that

had a secure monthly income through the government. At the beginning (1975-76) there was an urgent need for jobs for the unemployed refugees and non-refugees and so industry was reactivated through specific plans and funds. The second emergency plan in 1977-78 utilized labour and existing resources and envisaged expansion and the use of new resources.

(v) Health

The standard of health of Cypriots, based on statistical data, is comparable to that of developed European countries and Cyprus is one of the healthiest places in the Middle East. Both the adult death rate and the infant mortality rate were fairly low between 1960 - 1979 with the exception of the year 1974, when destruction and death increased because of the armed conflict and the invasion (for more statistics on this area see section 5.2 of chapter 5). One point I would like to add here is that in 1979-1980 the Government Health Service employed about 200 full-time doctors out of a total of 400; other doctors worked as private practitioners since there is as yet no National Health scheme comparable to the British one. Socialised health services were introduced after 1974 for a much bigger percentage of the population as a result of the economic constraints faced by the refugee population.

Medical facilities are provided at refugee settlements and at the remaining Government hospitals of Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos. Private and Governmental medical services mean that today there is one doctor for every 1,000 people and an overall ratio of 6 beds per 1,000 people. No serious infectious diseases occur in Cyprus and, according to governmental planning, provision has been made for the strengthening and consolidating of the existing Health Service as well as for improving the preventive and social health services.

(b) The Church as a powerful politico-social institution

As mentioned in Chapter two and in the earlier part of this Chapter the Church played the leading role in the ENOSIS (8) movement and the Independence struggle during both the Ottoman and British occupations. The Church was thus central to the National Question ideologically, institutionally and in terms of personalities. From 1960 to 1977 the head of the Church was the head of the newly-formed Cypriot Republic. Makarios the Archbishop could not be a completely different person from Makarios the President. There was only one incident where his holding of the two posts was severely questioned by



the Council of all Cypriot Bishops. At that time the Bishop of Paphos, encouraged by the Greek Junta army officers on the island, openly opposed President Makarios and was supported by part of the clergy, creating a really threatening political and social problem on the island. The whole issue is known as the Church Crisis of 1972-3, when three Bishops openly opposed Makarios. One comentator on this event says that:

The Greek Ambassador invited three of the Bishops of the Church of Cyprus to publicly oppose Makarios. Old men of limited understanding, they were easily persuaded by the representative of the mother country that they were doing their patriotic duty. (Attalides 1980:146 )

(i) The Influence of the Church in the political sphere

The Orthodox Church of Cyprus requires to be present at and be heard in any event that is of national importance. The position of the Church in elections was and still is that of a national institution pledging to defend the interests of the nation, mainly referring to the Greek population of the island. Any party which shows tendencies to become anti-ecclesiastical is not endorsed by the Church. The formation of approved and accepted political parties is ensured on the basis that the Church

participates in the debates of, and establishes links with all powerful parties, thereby securing its own position from direct attack. If a political party is not seen to be in the interests of the Church then it will definitely not be encouraged and under some circumstances be strongly opposed; for example AKEL, the Communist Party of Cyprus, has been opposed by the Church for years. Church dominance is secured by opposing implicitly and explicitly through the pulpit, all those institutions and individuals that have views which differ from its own. Through the media, especially the radio and television, the Church has a much wider audience than the congregation that gathers in Church on Sundays and other holidays. This is true of those religious programmes that are transmitted regularly by the radio as well as all other implicit references to religion through various other programmes.

Clerics have been actively involved in the politics of the Country. The case of Archbishop Makarios being the head of the newly-established State will be repeatedly mentioned because it strongly supports my point of a powerful Church presence in the political life of the island. Until now, though, there have been no other clerics holding political posts. No cleric has sat in the Parliament, there has never been

any cleric Minister in the Government, and it is true that the present Archbishop, who sees himself as an eminent political figure has not yet managed to get himself directly involved in major political decision-making.

(ii) The influence of the Church in the Educational Sphere.

It is accepted by most researchers into Cypriot society that education before and after Independence was closely connected with religion. The Church in general tries to retain extensive control at the ideological level of social reproduction, and education is the field where this aim can be achieved. In Cyprus, especially, because of the historical circumstances mentioned above and the many misfortunes of the island, the Church was left for long periods as the only organiser and financial supporter of the schools. And since the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church of Cyprus is interested in ensuring the dissemination of ideas which correspond to its social and moral teaching, it has found ways skilfully to manipulate both educational policy and practice. As Persianis states in 1978, (and the situation is almost the same today):

Greek education in Cyprus remained closely connected with religion. No person of another

religion could teach at a Greek elementary school and the Orthodox religion was an integral part of the curriculum of both elementary and secondary schools. This notion of education was shared by the whole Greek population of Cyprus. No Greek Cypriot ever demanded the elimination of the Greek Orthodox religion from the curriculum of the schools. Because of this connection Church leaders were entitled to censure the Government about the appointment of non-Orthodox Inspectors of Schools. At the same time Church leaders retained a tremendous influence over the teachers even after the latter became Government employees. (Persianis 1978:205)

Later on, the same writer adds:

Archbishop Makarios gave considerable financial support to the classical schools, catechetical schools and youth groups. Moreover he established the Educational Council of the Ethnarchy which not only co-ordinated the educational activities of the Greek secondary schools but in addition promoted and co-ordinated opposition to the Colonial Governments educational plans. (ibid: 226)

After Independence the same educational policy of 'support' and intervention was pursued by the Church.

Those ministers who questioned the legitimacy of the interference of the Church in the formation of educational policy had to face the Archbishop's/President's reaction who in his powerful dual role could obstruct any change in the policy if it were to affect the Church. It was not until after Makarios' death in 1977 that, for the first time in the political life of the island since 1960, the posts of President and Archbishop were held by two different people.

Subsequently, minor and major conflicts on educational issues arose between a Minister and the Church resulting finally in the removal from office of the Minister. In Summer 1979 an open dispute arose between the Minister and the Archbishop. The Archbishop reacted sharply to any progressive hint that education should be modernised by changing traditional methods of teaching and the curriculum. The fact that this Minister was removed from his office soon after the public debate, demonstrates that the Church continues to exert power over decision-making in Education.

(c) Political parties

A multi-party political life exists on the island among both the communities, and parties are formed by and promote the interests of various groups. Among the Greek Cypriots the political party towards the extreme left is the Communist Party AKEL which is in close contact with Communist parties abroad. Then comes the Socialist Party EDEK, followed (in terms of political beliefs) by DHKO, the centre and the DHSY, the right wing party.

The governing party at the time of my fieldwork was DHKO - the Democratic Party of the centre led by Mr

Kyprianou which cooperated with the Communist party, AKEL, in the elections of 1979 and 1981. In Chapter 6 further details are given of the political parties with reference to women, and in chapter 11 reference is made to the political parties of the country and the latest Presidential elections of 1983.

#### (d) Organisation at the local level

Administratively the island is divided into six districts: Nicosia, Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Kyrenia. Each one of these districts has as its administrative capital its principal town of the same name. The town of Nicosia is also the island's capital and seat of the government. Municipalities in the towns administer affairs through their Improvement Boards. Two of the above mentioned towns, Famagusta and Kyrenia, were occupied by the Turkish army during the 1974 invasion and are still under occupation, but have retained in the areas of new settlement their local administration, their councillors and mayors as well as a limited administrative staff.

Village authorities administer local affairs through the Headman or president of the Municipal authorities - the 'Mouktar' - and his councillors, the 'azades'.

The headquarters to the district office/<sup>are</sup> based in the town. In Chapter 7 I give some details about local government at Horio. In the context of small villages the local government is in some cases represented by the same people as the local ecclesiastical administration; for example, the Committee that, headed by the priest, runs the Church affairs, may consist of the same or some of the local secular administrators.

(e) The smallest political unit: family and kinship

Here I refer to the family, and the significance of households and the kinship ties that link households, considering it as the smallest political unit of the country and the one in which the Greek Cypriot woman is placed in a certain position because of the ideology that surrounds the family and assigns to women a specific role.

The basic element in Greek Cypriot society is a strong and closely knit family unit, consisting of a married couple and their children under the undisputed and frequently authoritarian leadership of the father/husband. Thus a female person generally speaking is guided by, and is dependent on her father until she marries, and thereafter on her husband.

This dependence helps to define many of her beliefs and personality traits, values, rights, duties, dispositions, aspirations, feelings, intra-familial and extra-familial relations, and so the broad shape of her life. Where femininity comes to signify dependency on man, the position of a girl or woman is inferior to that of a boy or man in a variety of respects. Whatever her class origin, she has fewer opportunities to learn about herself, and many more obstacles than a male to developing her talents, interests, abilities, imagination and knowledge of her natural and social environment; and to pursuing in accordance with these a happy and fulfilling way of life. The centrality of this familial form and all it implies is significant, since the general aim of the research is to provide an understanding of the condition of Greek Cypriot women, and more especially of the character and causes of their inferior position in relation to their men. The Greek Orthodox church itself during the marriage ceremony, which is considered as one of the seven mysteries, reads to the newly weds St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. One of the moral imperatives that arises from this Epistle is that the wife must be submissive to her husband, who should be the 'master of the woman'. She must 'fear' her husband. (9) The fact that we have had to refer here to a religious ceremony when speaking about a



social institution like the family shows that a study of the values and moral principles of Cypriot society cannot be considered outside the framework of the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church; this will be further illustrated in the next chapter.

## 2.3 The socioeconomic structure of Cyprus

### (a) Climate, agriculture, trade, industry, emigration

Cyprus is characterised by diversity of the topography and the climate and this permits the production of various kinds of crops, ranging from bananas on the south coast to cherries in the mountains.

About 23% of the total area of cultivated land is irrigated. In the lowlands the principal crops are cereals (wheat and barley), vegetables, citrus fruit and potatoes. Olive trees can be found everywhere in the north and the south but especially on the hill slopes facing the sea. On the southern and western slopes of the Troodos mountains vineyards occupy the largest areas. In the fertile mountain valleys some fruit trees grow, amongst them apple, cherries, pears, plums, almond trees.

Cyprus is an island and its coastal areas, some of which are of exceptional beauty (hence the myth of Aphrodite the goddess of love being born from the waves of the sea in Paphos), play an important role in the development of tourism. According to CAP 59 - the Law Protecting Foreshores - there is a provision which prohibits the erection of any structure on several coastal zones. Because of the 1974 Turkish invasion 51% of these areas are now under occupation. Destruction of the environment was inevitable and the economy of the island was seriously affected.

Since the island has a pronounced Mediterranean climate with the typical changes in temperature and rainfall, crops and agricultural production in general are affected by the precipitation which is only 500 mm for the island as a whole. The uncertainty of autumn and winter rainfall on which agriculture and water supply generally depends affects the lives of the whole population and not only the peasants involved in agriculture. Snow falls every winter on the mountains from December till about April and it sometimes snows on the plains up to the suburbs of Nicosia.

There are two distinct features that characterise Cypriot agriculture and which are relevant to the lives of the rural women studied in Horio and referred

to in Chapter 7. The first is that there is now an irrigated intensive mechanised agriculture which has improved the production of vegetables, potatoes, table grapes, citrus and other fruits. The second is that the traditional dryland agriculture for cereals, tobacco, olives, carrots, almonds and wine-grapes continues to be practised and is affected differently from year to year by climatic changes, such as poor rainfall.

Cyprus, being a predominantly agricultural country, exports mainly agricultural products like table grapes, wines and cherries as well as green vegetables, from the early ones produced in greenhouses in irrigated areas to the spring and summer green vegetables. Olives, carrots, citrus fruit, and potatoes are also exported in smaller quantities.

#### (b) Key divisions in Cypriot society

Greek Cypriot society, like many modern societies, is complex, and contains within it many contradictions, and conflicts between the beliefs or the interests of various institutions and individuals.

The overall social structure of Cyprus has a different base from that of Western societies. Social change is still taking place there, and all the more rapidly as a result of the effects of the war on the economy and social life. As was seen in the introduction (p34) there are those who would argue that Cyprus is developing along capitalist lines and that one could attempt a broad and flexible social classification based on the Registrar General's five classes. In my view, however, this classification does not in itself constitute an adequate basis for the description of Cypriot society.

Generally speaking, people in each of the social classes are seen as having common economic interests and similar lifestyles, and sharing certain values and aspirations. It should be added here that there are sometimes differences between the goals and achievements of individuals belonging to the same class, as well as between those of members of different classes. Material benefits are distributed unequally between different classes and it is generally believed that the wife shares the class position of her husband. The wife of a doctor, for example, is said to enjoy the material and social benefits of her husband's class position, and in this

differs from the wife of a manual worker. But I argue later that in some respects, this same wife of a doctor enjoys a class position different to that of her husband and closer to that of other women of whatever social background.

We can distinguish between the use of social class as an analytic concept in theories where the concept has an explanatory power in the understanding of processes of social change, conflict and contradiction and social class as a nominal, descriptive concept where it is used to create a somewhat arbitrary distinction between social groups hierarchically arranged on the basis of occupation or education or both. There is some association between the empirical specification of such hierarchically arranged groups and the expected relations entailed in the analytic concept of social class and class relations. For example, most nominal social class scales are based upon a crucial distinction between manual and non-manual occupational functions although the crossover point and especially its sociological meaning has become very ambiguous. Further it is likely to be the case that an unequal distribution of power over physical and symbolic markets, prestige and opportunity is broadly associated with positions in the hierarchy of social classes empirically specified by the nominal concept.

On the other hand there is always difficulty when we use the analytic concept of social class and class relations to specify empirically the precise boundaries between class groups, class factions and their internal and external relations. It is not my intention here to enter into this discussion but simply to show how I am going to use social class as a key division in Cypriot society.

There are many difficulties in the construction of a nominal social class scale. In general, empirical sociological research uses or modifies an existing social class scale which has been constructed on the basis of a rational methodology. However, it is also the case that researchers tend to construct scales according to the specific requirements of their research on the basis of occupational function and/or educational level. In this research I faced a double problem. Whilst a social class scale has been constructed for a specific rural society studied by Dr Loizos in the early 1970's no such scale exists which deals with urban and rural Cypriot societies as a whole. Even Loizos' scale is not constructed to create discrete groups necessarily relevant to the understanding of women's position in that society. The U.K. social class scales based upon a rational methodology refer to an occupational and prestige

structure different from that of Cyprus which in many respects can be regarded as a developing society. To complicate matters still further, after the 1974 war there was some re-defining of the prestige and power relations between social groups.

What I have done is to construct somewhat arbitrary social divisions which have emerged from my examination of the 222 women in my sample. As this is not a randomly selected sample, and is also of limited size, no claim can be made for these divisions as being representative of the hierarchical and oppositional ordering of social class relations in Cyprus. However, as I will show later, this particular categorizing of social classes does relate to attitudes towards women.

Table 3.1

Social Class	Description
I	Upper professional, trading and commercial, urban based, Europe educated.
II	Lower middle classes (Further Education, Secondary and primary school teachers and civil servants.
III	Small traders, shopkeepers and artisans
IV	Workers, urban based or commutes to city on monthly or weekly based contracts.
V	Peasant landholders, shepherds and agricultural workers.

It may seem unusual to have grouped together peasant landholders and shepherds and agricultural workers but as a group they are homogeneous with respect to their attitudes to women. For other purposes, however, it would be necessary to separate peasant landholders from shepherds and agricultural workers. I should also note here that the landholding is fragmented into



relatively small holdings because of the dowry system and the inheritance norms, i.e. each child should inherit equally from the parent's property. Oppositions between these groups exist like everywhere else in this world, but space and the nature of my field work do not allow for commenting on this issue. Some recent research (in progress still) is dealing with this issue in a thorough way. (10)

### Sexual Divisions

In Cyprus there is a 'natural' sexual division of labour so that the role expectations of men and women or husbands and wives are clearly defined and complementary to one another. A man's role is to represent his family in the public life of the community, to protect his wife and children and to provide the family income. On the other hand the role of the woman is domestic and expressive. She carries responsibility for everything that has to do with the routine of the household, cleaning, cooking, shopping, looking after the children and domestic animals. Men who help their wives in housework are regarded as lacking in manhood, especially in villages. So the majority of them cannot conceive of the possibility of helping with any sort of domestic work. In cases of illness, during the first days or

weeks of the birth of a new baby, or when work of great physical strength is required, some rural Cypriot men may help. Urban men (husbands or sons) may be more involved in housework, again concentrating on more male jobs or parental duties e.g. putting children to bed.

The woman's role is also expressive. She is usually considered to be the centre of love and affection within the family. The fact that she has to obey, respect and submit to her husband also derives from her expressive role. In addition to the importance of an ideal 'Family Form' and certain 'necessary' rituals like dowry and marriage and key legitimating institutions - centrally the Church - the social conditions of women are further fixed by a wide range of ideological relations, that is accepted and enforced 'norms'. Sexual divisions are thus also reinforced through the specific examples of:

separation and difference, public and private spheres of life, permitted and gender differentiated social territories e.g. Churches with different doors for men and women, or coffee shops as gathering places for men and neighbourhood corners for women, and hierarchical differentiations (e.g. every male precedes every female in church processions ).

As a general statement one could say that Greek Cypriot women in the Cypriot society of today do not participate in public life in proportion to their numbers, although formally they have equal political rights. This is only one example of discrimination between men and women of the same class.

Furthermore in Cyprus if a comparison is to be made between men and women in each of the social classes it will be found that women tend to be more unhappy than men; women tend to have more serious psychological and moral problems than men and tend to live less fulfilling lives.

The unequal distribution of economic resources and benefits within Cypriot society is not the centre of study in this thesis, although the unequal distribution of wealth affects part of the female population of the Cypriot society. We have here discussed class and gender divisions essentially in a descriptive rather than in an analytic mode.

#### Rural change and development

The bulk of the Cypriot population resided mainly in rural areas until the 1970's. As statistics show, in 1946 74% of the entire population lived in rural settings while in 1960 the figure decreased to 64% and in 1973 to 42%.

In Cyprus, the Orthodox Church has traditionally been the largest landowner, especially in rural areas. (11) Through the ownership and leasing of land the Church exerted power in most rural areas and intervened in village social relations and local politics. All this, of course, was reinforced by the spiritual power the Church already had. Economic power and ideological hegemony made the Orthodox Church a strong force which completely dominated rural life until 1960. After Independence and because of Church involvement in the anti-colonial struggle agrarian life underwent considerable changes; firstly land was distributed with the Church selling at very reasonable prices or even giving its land free, on renting-owning conditions (12) to EOKA fighters or supporters, who were usually very close to Church interests in their area and mainly 'right wing' people. P. Sant Cassia (1981) argues that the Church distributed its land partly to modernize its wealth, and partly 'to favour EOKA gunmen who had taken up the gun on its behalf.' (13) Land was the reward for these fighters. Changes in land and property ownership in the 1960's resulted in some families coming to possess more land and thus prestige, status and power; all these were very important elements in village social relations. The village hierarchy and family relationships were affected by the transmission of

more or a different kind of property, according to the persisting traditional dowry system. Among other results, this change in land tenure from one single land-owner, the Archdioceses or the nearby monastery, to individual villagers favoured by the Church gave such men 'a head start' over other villagers in wealth and as a result they dominated village life. In terms of family life, these land changes in some areas of rural Cyprus, Horio included, caused the transmission of property from parents to children during the lifetime of the parents instead of after death, usually after the marriage of most or all of their children. The Cypriot rural family system is an institution which exerts its own influence on social life but is also affected by other factors and changes taking place in the rural community. During the last three decades from the 1950's through the 1980's land consolidation was experienced universally in Cyprus, also because of the war. Furthermore, in 1974 rural Cyprus experienced a massive enforced population movement and loss of agrarian land as a result of the Turkish invasion and occupation of 36% of the island. The presence of so many refugees, Turkish and Greek Cypriots, but especially Greek Cypriots in the South, is the most dramatic demographic change affecting all areas of rural life.

I would like to cite again here P. Sant Cassia (1981) who refers to 'Peyia' - his fieldwork rural setting - and Church activities there as well as the new organisations controlled by the centre e.g. the Co-operative system which had branches in all villages. In Peyia changes in agrarian life were more profound because of the participation of its people in the 1955-59 struggle and the importance of this village in the growing tourist industry. In the case of Horio, the Church, as the major landowner in the area, acted in a similar way, as it acted in Peyia by selling cheaply and in certain cases making gifts of good pieces of agricultural land to ex-EOKA fighters who subsequently, by acquiring property, further increased their prestige and influence in Horio and became the political leaders of the village.

In the agricultural field, mechanisation - the use of tractors, harvesting machines and vehicles for transporting and selling the products to the wholesalers in the towns - has resulted in men becoming specialised, as P. Sant Cassia put it, in "mechanised operations and bureaucratic/commercial dealings, whereas women remained confined to unskilled unremunerated, manual operations". The point here is that manual tasks were women's jobs and although the

women's contribution was absolutely essential to the survival of the family, their jobs in the agricultural field were never given status.

In other rural cases of very small holdings and big families the result was that there was a surplus of family labour and some members had to search for other sources of income; these tended to be the men who could emigrate to towns or abroad (14). Women were left to deal with these small holdings and make the most out of them for household consumption. Thus 'feminization' of agriculture took place on a larger scale after 1974, and Horio was included in this process. During the postwar period, when some men were unemployed, Horio women, like other Greek women, were in no better position vis a vis housework, childcare, agricultural work; all these jobs have been labelled women's tasks; women should carry on with their habitual tasks while men remained idle. In some rural areas e.g. in Pitsilia in Cyprus this led to extremes of quasi-parasitic dependence on women's labour, a dependence which far from giving women greater autonomy can only be sustained by means of harsher and more violent subjugation of women.

It is within such contexts that men will uphold an ideology of their superiority with greatest force, although such 'defensive patriarchy' must not be confused with its traditional form (Kandiyoti 1980:16) (my emphasis)

Cyprus is a developing country and, like all other countries in a similar situation, has undergone some fundamental processes of rural transformation and intersectoral shifts in its economy. I am mainly concerned here with the woman's new role in the changing rural production system and in domestic production in general.

Most developing countries experienced a redistribution of institutional and economic power between the sexes with deleterious effects on women in terms both of restricting their autonomy even further and of promoting a wider status and productivity gap between men and women. (This is a general phenomenon as Boserup (1970), Chaney and Schnink (1976), Mernissi (1979), Rogers (1980) and Tinker (1976) argue.)

Although we can see some positive results such as some loosening of traditional patriarchal controls and alleviation of work loads in many cases, it is more correct to argue, like Giele (1977), that economic development has produced both emancipation and constriction for rural women.

A dominating view about women and development is that women's labour in agricultural production has been largely ignored and gone unrecognised although it was



always of critical importance and absolutely necessary for the rural economy. Meillassoux (1975), discusses the articulation of different modes concerning production and women in developing countries. Similarly Kandiyoti has observed this and states that:

...Clearly the structure of underdeveloped economies has a direct bearing on the whole question of women's productive and reproductive roles. It is equally clearer, however, that it is by no means indifferent whether transformation is taking place within the context of classic patriarchy or within kinship and productive systems allowing women relatively greater autonomy. (Kandiyoti 1980:21).

She later on adds that:

...neither knowledge about traditional gender role systems with their institutional and ideological supports (such as family structure and religious controls) nor an analysis of contemporary economic change, rural transformation in this particular case, are in themselves sufficient for a full understanding of women's status. (Kandiyoti 1980:30)

She attempts herself to highlight the way in which changes in the sexual division of labour are mediated both by the nature of pre-existing relationships between the sexes and the modalities of capital penetration in rural areas. Kandiyoti came to the conclusion that there is a dynamic interplay between economic change and traditional gender role systems. Benaria (1979) and Kate Young (1981) also discussed this and arrived at a general statement on the following issues that I summarise below:

a) The social organisation of the traditional peasant household

Many agrarian societies are characterized as patriarchal. The social and sexual hierarchy at home is relevant to what goes on in the labour process. Women as agents of reproduction of the group have a crucial role. Their productive and reproductive capacities are completely appropriated by their patrilineage. According to Kandiyoti, the rules of the village patriarchy dictate that the hardest work is always associated with youngest age, female sex and lowest status.

b. The processes of rural transformation in Cyprus were as follows:

- 1) A shift to production for the market. This takes a wide variety of forms and exhibits varied outcomes.
- 2) Agricultural commodization - for example export fruit and vegetables. From a subsistence economy an integration into the national market develops.
- 3) A transformation of the village patriarchy also takes place since the surplus rural labourers

emigrate and become wage earners in the city. As a result, a concentration of land and capital resources into fewer hands takes place, which results in the creation of a group of sub-marginal villagers for whom land is a supplement to other income. The father in most of these cases is not the only holder of economic resources. His unquestioned authoritarian role is to some extent undermined.

The trend of educating children and orienting them towards non-agricultural occupations is increasing in rural areas. In Kandiyoti's study she also observed an early nuclearization, or assumption of leadership roles by younger men in the village. This gave them some freedom in choosing their own spouse:

Although this development may at first sight seem to favour only the earlier emancipation of younger males, it does have an effect on women through complementarity. However it is those same processes that modify traditional family structure which also modulate the demand for family labour and in particular the labour of women so that the potentially liberating effect of patriarchal 'dissolution' may be superseded by novel forms of exploitation. (Kandiyoti 1980:22)

The use of machinery, the new labour saving technology in rural production, results in the withdrawal of women from the production process. They are sent back to their homes and family duties. In this way the

maintenance of a more patriarchal family structure here coincides with a significant alleviation of women's workloads. Only poor farming families use women as an absolutely necessary labour force.

The labour saving technology has been welcomed by those women affected as giving them status which they didn't have as productive agricultural workers. They don't feel that they have lost control of any kind of power because, as I argued above, they did not have any real power at all. As Kandiyoti puts it:

"...labour did not bring any kind of resource control in its wake"  
Wives/Women of big landlords were always confined to domesticity. In this case, it is not only that greater confinement to domesticity is a mark of status, but also that it very simply represents greater freedom from rural drudgery. (Kandiyoti 1980:13).

c) The differing outcomes in terms of women's familial and productive roles:

The shift to production for the market has a decisive impact on household organization and women's familial and productive roles. It has been argued that a transformation of the traditional family structure and its domestic cycle, has taken place in the rural

communities of some developing countries . But, as Kandiyoti says:

An issue of at least equal relevance to how much labour rural women are putting in, is that of how much they are getting in return. This is, in fact, where the greatest gap between the sexes seems to have been created stemming from the fact that men's privilege has extended over the cash nexus giving them exclusive control over money, even when they are not the ones who have earned it.. The patriarchal climate was totally ripe in Turkey and this mode of control came as an almost natural extension of traditional male prerogatives... Ultimately, the cash nexus re-establishes and reinforces patriarchy at another, very potent level. (Kandiyoti 1980:17).

It is also argued that better sanitation as a product of commercialization helped women in housework. Technology in the form of gas cookers, refrigerators, soap and detergent and in some cases washing machines, ready-made clothes and tinned food has found its way into the rural home, reducing considerably the labour input that goes into home production. Since all these things have to be bought and cash is mainly in the hands of the male head of the household, the control of home consumption is lost by most women. In many developing societies, a consequence of this is the creation of a double standard of consumption between the sexes (Kiray, 1979). Men act as middle-men vis-a-vis their women, marketing their goods (e.g. selling olives and fruit or embroideries that their women have laboured on) and controlling the income.

In this chapter I have outlined briefly the historical political and socioeconomic background in the context of which the lives of contemporary Greek Cypriot women should be seen. This background also throws into relief the institutions and rituals which mesh together and reproduce patriarchal relations, securing to some extent the active consent of women to their own subordination.

I continue now with more detailed reference to religious institutions and dominant regulations which 'fix' women. I try to show contemporary forms of religious control exercised through the policies and practices of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus. This chapter could be read with reference to both 'the ordinary' Greek Cypriot women, and also in terms of the problem already established in chapters above i.e. the WMPNs or 'Women Without Men'. The problem of those women without men seems to be the result of the special historical circumstances of Cyprus i.e. the 1974 war. Although such women, along with many others, suffered because of that war, the war alone is not a sufficient explanation of why these particular problems are held to be the fault of those women. In many ways 'their' problems are normal. One aim of the next chapter is to show how the Church puts that normalisation into practice.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

1. EOKA A was the first organization of guerilla fighters who fought the independence war of 1955-59.
2. EOKA B was the second organization again headed by General Grivas who aimed to overthrow Makarios and fulfill the nationalistic aim of ENOSIS.
3. Some of the commentators on the Cypriot Problem are: politicians, e.g. VANEZIS, DENKTASH, KISSINGER etc.. some are academics from the Greek and Turkish communities eg. LOIZOS, ATTALIDES, MARKIDES, POLYVIU, STAVRINIDES, BATZELI TOZUN, ERGIN FERIDUN etc. These and other media commentators refer to the Cypriot problem as a complex one.
4. Turkey's arrogant declaration of entering Cyprus as a peacemaker has already been mentioned above, but I considered it important to be repeated because of its arrogance.
5. Turkish population from poor areas of mainland Turkey had been imported and settled in North Cyprus to change the demographic features of the island.
6. The ministers are answerable to the President of the Republic.
7. Recent (Revision of income tax 1980) changes in the taxation system initiated by a certain judge whose interests were not catered under the previous system, introduced the rule of taxing wife's property separately from that of the husband.
8. ENOSIS- UNIFICATION WITH GREECE was the slogan that EOKA A started the independence struggle for.
9. St Paul in his Ephesian Epistle reprimands the wife to fear her husband. This is read to the newly weds during the marriage ceremony.
10. I have attempted in this section a possible class categorisation in Cyprus but I was not able to comment on oppositions amongst these social class groups because my research focus was on women and the private world of family life than that of men, class antagonisms and the work arena. References to women and work in chapters 7 and 8 did not go in such depth as to touch on issues of oppositions between women of different class groups. I covered as much literature as I could find on Cypriot social formation and realized that secondary sources could not support any further discussion on oppositions between social class groups in Cyprus. During this search I came across research in progress at the University of

Leeds, by a Cypriot student, whose findings in the near future will shed light on this particular issue.

11. Church in Cyprus was, during the 1950s and 1960s the biggest landlord, leasing out land or olive trees to individual peasant families or groups of families on a high rent.

12. After the 1960 Independence and the formation of the Cypriot Republic the Greek Orthodox Church sold very cheaply land to EOKA fighters showing gratitude and recognition of their services.

13. Paul Sant Cassia 1981 discusses this issue at some length and argues that the church did it for two reasons: a) to modernise its wealth, b) to favour those who fought for the ideals that the church was committed to.

14. Because of the fragmentation of the land and the scarce resources in rural Cyprus, especially during the 1940s and 1950s, young male members of big families emigrated to towns or abroad thus releasing property on the one hand and becoming a source of constant income for their parents since most of them send part of their salaries back home.



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CHAPTER 3 - THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CYPRUS

- 3.1 A brief history of the Church before Independence (AD 431 - 1959).
- 3.2 The Church since Independence (1960 - 1979).
- 3.3 The Church's legal regulations and the position of women.
  - a) Canon law and Ecclesiastical Courts.
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- 3.4 Other influences of the Church

### CHAPTER 3: THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CYPRUS

This chapter first provides a historical survey of the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church, with detailed reference to the processes through which it gained political and economic power. It then goes on to deal with the Church as a formal establishment, concentrating on those institutions and practices, ideologies and images that relate to women. One such institution is marriage, with the related practice of dowry contracts, both being illustrative examples of the power of the Church over the social and economic life of women.

The chapter is divided into three main parts, the first being historical, dealing both with the Church through the centuries of foreign domination and with its legal standing throughout its history. The second deals with its institutional practices and its pervasive influence over private and social life. I cover firstly the presence of the Church in the life of Greek Cypriot women from birth to death, showing its hegemonic presence in all the ceremonies related to every aspect of the individual's life. I then discuss the ideologies and images of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus; issues connected with the presence of the religious doctrine in everyday life,

especially in relation to the family, the issues of contraception, homosexuality and sexuality in general and in the reworking of custom and folklore, are discussed in more detail here. The third part of this chapter deals with its less tangible but equally powerful political effects: with the influence of the Church in the secular sphere, stressing its 'negative' abilities to block and regulate political change.

### 3.1 A brief history of the Church before Independence (AD 431-1959)

The agreed version in all Greek Cypriot religious histories, which is taught as an obligatory lesson from the age of 5 and which is internalised from this early age by all Greek Cypriots, says that St Paul and St Barnabas visited Cyprus in AD 45 and converted the Roman Proconsul to Christianity, thus making the island the first region in the world to be administered by a Christian.

Christianity spread through Cyprus quickly, and three centuries later, when it became the official religion of the Byzantine Empire, the Cypriot Church was recognised as an autocephalous body according to the eighth canon of the third Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus

in AD 431. The gaining of independence by the Church, an important aspect of its power today, is worth mentioning briefly because it was initially disputed in the Ecumenical Synod by the Patriarchs of Antioch. However, after the miraculous discovery in Cyprus of the bones of the martyred St Barnabas (with a copy of St Matthew's Gospel in Barnabas' own handwriting resting on his bosom) Archbishop Anthemios received from the Emperor Zeno confirmation of his Church's position. Since then the Archbishop of Cyprus has ranked equal in dignity with the four original Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. His imperial privileges have thus included permission to wear a purple clack, to carry a sceptre at Church festivals, and to sign his name on official documents in red ink, all prerogatives of the ancient Byzantine emperors. The British historian Sir G Hill points out in the first volume of his book 'A history of Cyprus', that these "privileges, expressing recognition of temporal authority seem somewhat excessive and have had frequent repercussions down to the present day."

The Orthodox Church of Cyprus subsequently flourished until the Muslim/Christian struggle during which Arab raiders plundered the island for a period of about 300 years (AD 905 - 1191).

It was during this period that the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II persuaded Archbishop John to leave the island with a number of his followers and set up a new settlement on the shores of the Hellespont known as Nova Justiniana. This community came back to Cyprus years later when Arab strength was failing, although the Muslim attacks on the island continued to cause much damage.

The next setback for the Cypriot Orthodox Church came from a Christian source and was more serious and much more destructive. The Lusignan kings and queens (1192 - 1489) made Roman Catholicism the official Cypriot religion during their period of government of the island. The Orthodox bishops were reduced from fourteen to four and were obliged to receive orders from four newly appointed Roman bishops, who also appropriated the ecclesiastical revenues of the Orthodox Church. The Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus was at once deprived of most of its property and subordinated to the Western Roman Church. Deposed orthodox Bishops were sent into exile while monks were burnt to death for refusing to convert to the Roman faith. This period with its severe persecutions produced a deep bond between the Church and the Greek Cypriot population who were made serfs under the feudal system of the Frankish and later Venetian periods which lasted from 1489 - 1571 A.D.



In 1453 the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. In 1571 they occupied Cyprus after defeating the Venetians; this had immensely far-reaching political consequences, for the Cypriot Orthodox Church in particular. The system by which the Ottoman occupiers administered the Christian communities was the millet or ethnos (nation) system, by which each community was put under the control of its spiritual leader, the Millet Bashi, who was himself responsible to the Turkish rulers who had given him the authority. This meant that Greeks and Greek Cypriots were allowed to retain their religious identity, with the Church now made an official administrative and regulative institution of the state.

The administrator or Ethnarch of Cyprus (leader of the nation) was the Archbishop of the island, who became the leader and the spokesman of the Greeks on all administrative and political issues. Thus the marriage of Church and State was consecrated at the highest level.

The collection of taxes was the Ethnarch's responsibility. Throughout the occupied Greek Orthodox world the detailed jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople was exercised

locally through the bishop and the lower clergy in all matters that affected the private life of the Christian population, that is: marriage, divorce, dowry and inheritance. Language and the values transmitted through it, customs and tradition, social institutions, sets of beliefs and practices were under Greek Orthodox control, helping the Greek millet, including Cyprus to develop and maintain a conception of its own nationhood inextricably bound up with its religious identity.

Gradually, the Archbishop of Cyprus acquired a measure of power which in the sphere of the administration of day-to-day affairs was greater than that of the Pasha, who represented the island's conqueror as secular governor. Cypriot bishops made many journeys to Constantinople to intercede for their people, and for Cyprus and were thus recognised as civil authority. In the words of a modern Greek Cypriot historian, 'It was a double-edged privilege. It could be used to reinforce the machinery of oppression and exaction of taxes or to resist it'.

The power of the Archbishop continued to grow; as William Turner, a young English diplomat visiting Cyprus in 1815, put it, Cyprus was in fact governed by the Greek Archbishop and his subordinate clergy. The

Archbishop was assisted in the more difficult aspects of tax collection by the Dragoman of the Savoy, the Turkish Governor's chief interpreter, who was normally a Greek. Together they were a formidable combination.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Church acquired wealth and, as well as being able to restore churches and monasteries, started the first Greek school which was founded by Archbishop Kyprianos (AD 1893); it is now the Pancyprian Gymnasium which has exercised a leading influence in Greek education in Cyprus. It is very important for the understanding of the transmission of beliefs about the images of women and their given position in Cypriot society to recognise the identification encapsulated in the popular <sup>saying</sup> / 'Helleno-Christian'; literally translated this means Hellenochristian Ideals and is a statement that the speaker is a Greek Orthodox. This was cemented by the way in which Greek education from the beginning was controlled by the Orthodox religion. The origins of modern Greek Cypriot Nationalism are properly traced to education because according to the principles it followed, to be a Greek Orthodox meant that the person was similar to all other Greeks inside and outside the Greek state. This had a formative influence on the kind of language with which Greek Cypriots expressed their political views on the future of their island.

The period of the Ottoman occupation of the island between 1571 - 1878 was not a peaceful one. Conflicts and outbreaks of violence often occurred, mainly inspired by external events. (e.g. the Greek War of Independence 1821.) But there were also times when Christians and Muslims combined forces in rebellion against the Ottoman governors and the leading Orthodox churchmen, both of whom at times acted as oppressive authorities in exacting taxes. This shows that the burden of unjust taxation weighed on both the Greek and Turkish communities in the island. Revolts and riots broke out on either side when the taxation screw was turned too far. Turner said of the priests that 'they are worse than usual in Cyprus because of the power they possess. They strip the poor ignorant superstitious peasant of his last para'. Usually accurate about detail, Turner adds the interesting information that for dues paid to the monasteries there was a special rate of exchange - sixty-five paras to the piastre instead of the normal forty.

In 1765 and 1804 Muslims and Christians united in revolt against decisions of the Ottoman administration and its civil powers. Thus for years the Greek Church was the effective civil power in Cyprus. In 1821, when the Greek War of Independence started on the mainland, Archbishop Kyprianos, his three bishops and

some two hundred Greek Cypriots were executed on the charge of being involved in the revolution. The Church of Cyprus thus gained its martyrs, and the myth of the national resistance under the leadership of the Ethnarch and the clergy in general was revived and reinforced again in 1931 and 1955-59.

The British arrived in 1878 to find that the Greek community of Cyprus had a well developed system of political representation through the Church as well as a degree of nationalist consciousness within their leading groups. One of the steps of British colonialism was to take taxation out of the hands of the Church, thereby diminishing its power in the economic sector of its administrative functions. But the Church maintained its ideological authority and influence throughout the British period - in fact its importance and influence both as a national organisation embracing all Greek Cypriot Orthodox Christians and as the principal advocate of the Greek national cause was increased through Cyprus becoming a British colony. To be a member of the 'true faith' and of the 'splendid Greek nation', to be an Orthodox Greek Cypriot, were two aspects of the same reality.

The Church took the initiative to approach the colonial powers through the Archbishop and remind them

that 'the population of the island does not forget its origin and traditions and dares look forward to a national future'.

In May 1889 Archbishop Sophronios a fanatical supporter of the ideal of unification with Greece, Enosis, - submitted a memorandum to London. In 1900, the then Bishop of Kition promised the people, in his electoral campaign, that he would throw out the British as soon as he won the elections. Appeals to the Hellenic-Christian ideals were made at every religious and social gathering. In the riots of October 1931, the Church played the leading role as Nikodemos Mylonas, the above mentioned Bishop of Kition, presented the enosist position which had been unaltered for half a century that is Union of Cyprus, the daughter, with Greece, the mother. His Manifesto, which was adopted on 17th October, asserts:

... We are determined to follow the only road which is open to us; the road that leads to our salvation ..... In the name of God, protector of Justice and Freedom, in the name of the eternal idea of our Hellenic heritage ... united, let us struggle together and he, who made man to be free, not the slave of others, shall guide our path.

In 1946 the leadership of the Church, headed by Archbishop Leontios, came to London to seek self determination leading to enosis. In 1948 the Church

rejected the constitutional plan for limited home rule proposed by the Governor because it felt that acceptance of the British plan might ultimately thwart the Greek Cypriot scheme for enosis. The churchmen were the political force behind the scheme and, through their sermons, encouraged Greek Cypriot hatred of the British colonialists. With Makarios III, the Ethnarch of the Greek Cypriot people who became Archbishop in 1950, a new chapter of the history of the island and of the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church begins. Makarios assumed command of the enosis campaign in 1950 against the background of the long Greek nationalist tradition, a tradition with its specific organisational and ideological aspects.

Since, 1571, as we have seen, the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus had been the national organisation of the Greek Cypriots, the prime mover of and focal point for enosis. Its continuous existence, administrative, educational and cultural influence created and maintained the sense of national identity. When it was deprived by the British of the right to administer the Greek Cypriots the Church concentrated on ideological power, specifically on education, propagating a Greek nationalist ideology, the main objective being enosis with Greece, the Motherland.

The Church controlled various organisations - right-wing parties, trade unions, farmers' associations, Church clubs, athletic clubs and the teachers. By forming a youth organisation in 1951 the Church aimed at spreading a militant kind of nationalism and the politicisation of the schools.

The Orthodox Church prospered as a consequence of British cultural imperialism. During British colonial rule attempts were made to suppress the national identity and the cultural heritage of the Cypriot people, particularly in the sphere of language, the medium for religious and nationalist historical teaching. This period made the Church and especially the individual priest the symbol of the combined political and religious resistance to British rule, a basic feature of Cypriot nationalism. Priests in villages and small towns were among the small minority of literate, learned people, informed educated debaters in coffee-shops and their help could be relied upon in the struggle for freedom. As mentioned above, the Church acquired certain privileges under the Ottoman rulers. When the British came in 1878 they attempted to secularise social and political life and this provoked the reaction of the Church. Both Loizos (1975) and Markides (1977) argue that the Church led the enosist struggle in order to prevent



the development of secular ideas of welfare and material well-being which would tend to undermine its authority. Of course, the church retained its property throughout the British period and, after 1960, when the economy began to grow, this property acquired great value. The Church, a 'traditional' institution participated in certain aspects of the modernisation of the Cypriot economy. The armed struggle of 1st April 1955 - February 1959 expressed Greek-Cypriot nationalist activities, giving the historical links of nationalism with the Church particular significance for the Cypriots at the very moment of Independence. The Church provided a focal point for the attainment of the ideals of a suppressed group and its voice added impetus to the movement to overthrow British rule. The test of true Greekness was positive and unequivocal support for "enosis and only enosis" as articulated by the Church.

### 3.2 The Greek Orthodox Church since Independence (1960 - 1979)

The pervasiveness of Orthodoxy in Cyprus can be measured by the fact that 77% of the entire population of this island is Orthodox although the island has been under Latin and Islamic domination. We have seen

that the allegiance to Orthodoxy has persisted through Latin, Islamic and British occupations. In the subsequent sections of this Chapter I shall ask: What mechanisms operate in Cypriot Society to ensure the continuation of the Church's position of especial influence?

We have seen in the historical outline how the Orthodox church became inseparable from Greek Cypriot identity, acquiring over the centuries a prominent and revered position in society, respected by politicians and laity alike. Statements issued by the Church Hierarchy on various social and moral issues are never treated with indifference and this is why the church plays such an influential role in shaping attitudes in favour of, or against social reform. Early in the development of the Cypriot Republic it became evident that the government was eager to engage the power of the State to secure legislation in harmony with the Church's social teaching in order to protect Orthodox moral values. The Orthodox Church in Cyprus today, unlike the situation vis-a-vis traditional religion found in many contemporary societies, has relinquished little of its ideological power and still enjoys a dominant status. Among the Greek-Cypriot population of the island the Orthodox outlook is pre-eminent.

It is extremely significant that the majority of this population do not resent this kind of domination. They accept it as a natural, organic and established part of Cypriot life. This shows, as has been argued previously, that it is incorrect to separate Church and public life or Church and State; the Church is as pervasive as the State in Greek Cypriot private and public life if not more so. Indeed it pervades the State, making a simple Church-State dualism misleading.

The questions that immediately arise here are: Why and how does the Church's domination of official beliefs and practices continue? Why is the Cypriot Government, which professes to be a democratic progressive government, so willing to ally itself with one of the most undemocratic, conservative institutions in society in the passing or defence of legislation that imposes extensive restrictions on individual freedom and human rights? There are features here in common with other countries which have overthrown oppressive regimes; for example, Ireland, where Protestantism was historically connected with English rule and opposed to Catholicism. Another more recent example is that of Iran. The 1979 Iranian Revolution is a useful example of the way in which non-identification with a fanatical revivalist version of Islam - oppressively

patriarchal and violent - is seen as collaboration with support for the Shah and by association with corrupt Western ideology.

The power of Orthodoxy is all the greater for being largely concealed. The policy of the Church is not to pursue open conflict with the government nor to attempt openly to direct it; it prefers to exert its considerable influence over the situation in the political arena whilst standing discreetly in the wings. Its relationship with the State is more or less peaceful - which follows from its intimate connection with government and dominant social ideas and practices, playing on the commonly held dualistic notion of Church and State as clearly separated, quite distinct and autonomous institutions.

Loyalty to each other has the further effect of ensuring the credibility of both during periods of crisis. With Makarios' successive presidentships the Church was sure that it had acquired a firm grip on the island having gained momentum for its bourgeois and national development and having strengthened its hold without interruption during the first period of Independence, 1960-1974. Its power increased during a period of rapid social and political development in which the hierarchy succeeded in effectively

supervising the evolution of the nation-state with a great deal of flexibility, diplomacy and determination. In the tactics that were adopted, the Church took every advantage of any peculiarities which emerged from the situation in which it found itself. A fuller account of the Church's power is given below. I now turn to the legal aspects of the regulation of women giving first a brief discussion on women and the law, to be followed by a historical analysis of the functioning of Cypriot Canon Law.

### 3.3 The Church's legal regulations and the position of women

In the Social Sciences, the hegemony of the Church used to be thought of as a remnant from an earlier epoch which would 'wither away' with modernisation. However, religion, like the State, concerning which similar hopes were cherished by many, did not comply. In many third-world countries, religion persists as powerfully as ever while in others, among which Iran is an extreme example, it is experiencing a revival.

In all those countries which have been under Ottoman occupation there exists a special relationship between the State and the dominant religion; for example,

between Judaism and the State of Israel and between Islam and the numerous Arab States. The relationship between the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Cyprus and the newly-established Cypriot state is typical. One of its most prominent features, a legacy of the occupation period, is that religious laws co-exist with the secular laws in some areas or transcend them in others.

It is important to stress the fact that even where traditional laws have been abandoned in favour of secular laws, in most areas modelled on Western institutions and practices, most countries have incorporated religious laws in the 'personal' area of Family Law, especially laws on marriage and divorce. The latter tend to exercise rigid control over women, the reproducers, so as 'to enable the collective to continue its reproduction in its traditionally defined boundaries'. (N.Y. Davis, 1979)

The exact manner in which this incorporation of religious laws into secular law has taken place varies from country to country. As I have suggested it represents a partial continuation of the legal system which operated in Cyprus, Palestine and some Arab countries during the time of the Ottoman Empire in which legal affairs were judicially handled by the religious denominations.

The consequence is that matters of marriage and divorce are decided upon in special familial courts in which the judges may be religious, professional or civil administrators, but the laws applied are religious and blatantly discriminate against women; thus in Cyprus where the ecclesiastical courts consist of deacons and bishops no judge of such a court can be female since the hierarchy of the Church is not open to women. Religious law, by being incorporated into the secular legal system, gained secular power, acquired the coercive power of the State and thus strengthened its monopoly.

In the West the reign of the Church was associated with feudal times and secular law with the rise of the modern nation-state after the French revolution:

Feudalism is freedom, but in the 'non-rational' form of privilege; the modern state is freedom but in the rational form of a universal right .... in the state, the state of law and right.

(Althusser, For Marx 1969: 224)

But the effective secularisation of the State seems to be a specific historical development in the Christian West and is by no means universal. Elsewhere, modern states of 'Law and Right' have found it possible to incorporate within their legal systems, which are

supposed to be based on the 'rational form of a universal right', sections which retain the religious 'non-rational' elements.

Not all states are as secular as Althusser implies. Nira Yuval-Davis (1979) argues that in the Jewish case, and most probably in other states, women are controlled by religious laws. This is of crucial importance in national and religious collectives for their reproduction of the labour force. The control of women as bearers of the collective does not, of course, have to be carried out by means of religious legislation. In a sense, all the struggle for and against birth control should be examined in this light. Although religious law affects men also it primarily discriminates against and controls women. Both men and women, and both the religious and non religious parts of the population in Cyprus, tolerate this situation.

The laws on marriage and divorce are seen as guaranteeing the physical continuity and stability of the nation, the Greek-Cypriot family being perceived as a microcosm of the nation. In this way the traditional, patriarchal and power-relations of Greek Orthodox Cyprus are transformed and subsumed into the 'modern' nation-state, so that women continue to be



excluded from equal participation in social and political life which is primarily male-dominated. It is important to note that in many cases the establishment of nation-states in the Third-World incorporated the pre-existing customary and traditional patriarchal power and class relations in the society in the political system, and strengthened them further by putting at their service the additional repressive and ideological apparatus of the state.

But, as in every social situation, these processes produce their own contradictions. The grounding of the patriarchal relations in the legal system of the nation-state adds to its power, but it also heightens and eventually brings into question its own particularism.

What we see in Iran, for example, is a popular anti-imperialist, revolution, that, because of the vacuum created in the Third World as a result of the relative weakening of the influence of both superpowers, can afford to go back to its own tradition and not to recruit western non-imperialist ideologies. But that same 'victory of the people' is only a victory for the patriarchal ideology of the nation. In fact, the series of mass demonstrations by

Iranian women late in 1979 reflects that they were very aware of this situation: the imperialists were thrown out but strong, traditional, religious, patriarchal ideologies are keeping women in suppression, indeed, reinforcing the conditions of their oppression.

a) Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Courts

(i) Before 1878

The Church of Cyprus, having gained its independence and become autocephalous in AD 431, has gone through various stages created by the many conquerors of the island but as mentioned above it hasn't lost its traditional moral and juridical power over the Greek-Cypriot people of Cyprus. As we have seen above the Church enjoyed various privileges during the Ottoman occupation. The orders from the Sultan came to the Church through circulars called 'veratia', up to the times of the Hatti Humayium in 1856. These gave the Church the right to its own administration, organisation, law courts etc.

### Latin Domination

When the Church in Cyprus was persecuted by the Romans and had no contact with the State authorities it surreptitiously extended its ecclesiastical jurisdiction to cover all the disputes affecting the Christian community, whether arising out of ecclesiastical and religious or social and other relations. Since the civil authorities were non-Christian they could not examine, solve and come to decisions regarding disputes between Christians. The procedures and decisions were regulated in accordance with the Christian precepts mainly contained in the New Testament and the religious tradition. As a development of this resistance tactic by the Church in the third century, a special institution for hearing and solving disputes between clergymen and laymen, called episcopalis audientia was formed. Of course, since the ruling civil authorities did not recognize the decisions of such underground courts, they were therefore valid and enforceable only within the ecclesiastical domain.

During the 4th century with the reign of Constantine the Great the Christian Church gained its freedom and status within the Roman Empire, and when the State became Christian the Emperors allowed the episcopalis

audientia to deal with disputes. These tribunals gave the Church exclusive jurisdiction over the clergy and over all matters that were entirely its own concern; for example the ecclesiastical life and behaviour of all its members was codified by the 9th Canon of the Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon where the clergy was restricted in its resort to secular courts. As a consequence of this decision and because of the fact that the demarcation line between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities was not very clear, the Justinian Novellae were written defining the extent of the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical and secular courts and forming the basis for subsequent legislation on the family both in Byzantium and in all its colonies.

Justinian, in fact, is considered the great legislator who gave the right to the husband to beat his wife with 'wooden sticks and whips'. Byzantine Law made the inequality between the sexes so explicit that Saint John Chrysostomos (one of the three prominent Byzantine hierarchs and educators) admitted it was excessive but, 'it is because men make the laws, that is why they are against women'. Subsequent Byzantine legislations and especially the Novellae of Alexios Komnenos, brought within the exclusive jurisdiction of

the ecclesiastical court all cases of a spiritual nature and disputes relating to betrothals, marriages and adoptions.

With the relations of Church and State coming closer, the influence of the Church on the exercise of the jurisdiction of the civil courts over its members was made more obvious, particularly by the recognition of the right of asylum, the jus asyli immunitas localis ecclesiarum (Tornaritis 1976:5). Under this a member of the Church under trial or convicted and sentenced by a secular court could not, if taking refuge in a Church, be expelled therefrom by force. Sometimes people under these conditions could escape trial and punishment by the secular courts.

Historically, as Tornaritis argues, the Latin occupation of the Byzantine Empire did not negatively influence the previous position of the ecclesiastical courts. Their jurisdiction, was on the contrary, expanded, because people did not have any confidence in the civil courts and resorted to the ecclesiastical ones even for disputes referring to claims of property and inheritance.

### Turkish Domination

The Turks inherited this state of affairs in 1453; Mohammed the Second, the Ottoman conqueror conferred certain privileges upon the Patriarch George Scholarios. The fact that the Patriarch was recognised 'as head of the eminent race of the Romans' as an Ethnarch and 'Lord Despot' is of considerable importance. This resulted in the exercise by the Patriarch of an extensive sovereignty and jurisdiction over Christian people all over the Ottoman empire. The Patriarch, and through him the various episcopal courts, exercised judicial jurisdiction not only in administering ecclesiastical property and in spiritual matters but also in disputes covering:

..... the whole field of private law and to a certain extent even of criminal law. The Christians preferred to resort to the religious courts.... rather than to the secular courts. The Muslim sacred law, 'sheri law', did not prohibit the resort to the episcopal courts and civil authorities rendered assistance in the execution of judgements of such courts in secular matters. Of course, the episcopal courts had power to inflict the spiritual penances provided by the Canon Law, which on many occasions were very effective.

(Tornaritis 1976:7)

With the two secular laws, the Hatti Sherif of 1839 and the Hatti Humayium of 1856, the Ottoman government gave its solemn promise to respect the privileges of the Christians. The principles of the sheri law were

officially recognised by state law. Of course, the Ottoman civil law 'Metzelle' was similarly lines very oppressive to women, explicitly showing that they were not at all comparable to men as persons since the evidence of a man could only be over-turned or balanced by the evidence given by two women. The Greek Orthodox Church was thus in a powerful legal and political position at the end of the period of Turkish domination.

(ii) After 1878

From 1878, the date of the British occupation of the island, up to 1914, the date of the British annexation of it as a crown colony, the ecclesiastical courts functioned as ab antiquo in accordance with the customs of the Greek Orthodox Church and the prevailing Church practice in other parts of the Greek Orthodox Church and especially in the patriarchate of Constantinople.

In 1914, the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus voted for the Constitution of the Holiest Church of Cyprus. As Chrysostomides (1968:3) argues, the fact that this Constitution came into force just at the time that Cyprus was annexed as a colony of Britain was no coincidence, but a reaction of the Church to the fear

of possible interference by the colonial power in its own affairs. Chrysostomides sees it as a major step towards the maintenance of the independence of the Church. By the Charter of 1914 the Church of Cyprus became a legal institution (Article 94) holding for itself the power and authority to deal with all its internal affairs. The colonial government accepted, or was forced by circumstances to accept, this Constitution, which remained in force until November 1979. It included 138 articles, the first two of which state that the Orthodox Church of Cyprus is governed by the Apostolic and synodical Canons and the Holy Traditions of the Orthodox Church and that the Provisions in the Charter are based on such Canons and Traditions.

The Christian Church, for the purpose of fulfilling its mission of maintaining the proper order and ensuring compliance with its law has been invested by its Divine Creator with authority to exercise jurisdiction over its members regarding matters arising out of their religious life and behaviour and connected with contraventions of or failure to comply with the commands of the Law of the Church.

(Tornaritis 1973:1)

Tornaritis sees this jurisdiction as independent of any grant or recognition by the State, as the Church belief is that it originates from the Founder of the



Church, Jesus Christ himself, who said to his disciples:

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou have gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.....

(St Matthew XXII, Milas - Apostolopoulou 1906:653)

The following ecclesiastical Courts were established by the 1914 Charter:

- a) The Holy Synod as an ecclesiastical court of first instance for all cases which do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Episcopal courts including disputes of clergymen or laymen with their Bishop. The Holy Synod is vested with exercise of the 'supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the island in respect of canonical offences of the clergy and the laity'.
- b) The Holy Synod as an appellate court in respect of appeals brought against decisions of the Bishops exercising criminal jurisdiction under Article (33) of the Charter.

c) The Episcopal courts, which are twofold:

i) In the first case the Bishop has criminal jurisdiction and in its exercise within his See in respect of canonical offences committed either by clergymen or laymen, may impose any of the punishments set out under Article 33.

ii) The second kind of Episcopal Court was constituted by the Bishop under Articles 71 and 72 of the Charter for the purpose of the dissolution of marriage. These courts consist of the Bishop or his representative who should be a clergyman, and two other clergymen nominated by the Bishop.

The Bishop has the power to constitute one or more Episcopal Courts in each episcopal area and to determine the local jurisdiction of each of them. Most significant for this research is the fact that the Episcopal Courts' jurisdiction is accepted by everyone. Questions have arisen as to the coverage and legal nature of the decisions of the Ecclesiastical Courts. Are they judicial decisions determining an existing dispute or are they simply acts of an administrative nature for the maintenance

of good order within the Church? As important as the 'legality' of the Courts is their sphere of influence - if all citizens are deemed Orthodox Christians are all events and relations regulated by these courts?

In Greece the prevailing opinion until recently, based mainly on the provisions of section 1 of Law 5383/1932 (concerning ecclesiastical tribunals and the procedure before such tribunals), was that the local ecclesiastical tribunals are not courts. In Cyprus the position of the ecclesiastical courts as established by the Charter of the Church of Cyprus is that they are real courts determining inter alia matters relating to personal status. Article 87, 1(d), of the Constitution of the Republic speaks about the composition and instances of courts dealing with civil disputes relating to personal status and to religious matters.

There are further ambiguities in the past relations to the various conquering powers. In particular there is a dispute regarding section 10 of the High Court of Justice Law of 1879 which declares that:

All jurisdiction, criminal or civil, over all persons and in all cases other than such as would have been under the sole jurisdiction and authority of the Ottoman Courts if the said Convention had not been made, shall, subject and according to the provisions of this Law, be vested in and exercised by the High Court.

Emilianides (1939:29-32) concludes from this provision that the colonial Government has taken away, at least temporarily, the competence of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Tornaritis does not share this opinion, especially in view of the provision of section 771 of the High Court of Justice Law of 1879 dealing with jurisdiction in matrimonial cases, under which:

..... the Court.... shall be a court for matrimonial cases, and as such shall, as far as circumstances admit, have all such jurisdiction, except the jurisdiction relative to the dissolution or nullity or jactitation of marriage.  
(Tornaritis, 1976:30)

Tornaritis goes on to comment on the temporary nature of this law and mentions that it was replaced by the Court of Justice Order in Council 1882 under which all the jurisdiction exercised by the Ottoman Courts (Nijam Courts) and the Queen's High Court of Justice (cl 21, 22) was transferred to the Courts established thereby.

Tornaritis, on the basis of the above evidence concludes that the ecclesiastical courts were not deprived of the jurisdiction they had on matrimonial matters. Citing the 1927 decision of the courts of Justice order in Council and the 1935 Courts of

Justice Law, he argues that the ecclesiastical courts enjoyed a jurisdiction recognised by the decided cases of the Supreme Courts of Cyprus.

.... the existence and functioning of the ecclesiastical courts has been repeated and expanded in subsequent legislation and has been finally recognised by Article III of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus.

(Tornaritis, 1976:17)

According to the Constitution, Article III, such courts have jurisdiction over matters of Engagement, Marriage, Divorces, Validity of Marriage, Separation, or Cohabitation and Family Relationships except in cases of legitimation and custody. This article of the Constitution gives absolute authority to the Ecclesiastical Courts.

Ecclesiastical jurisdiction was extended not only to the dissolution of marriage but also to other matrimonial cases such as cases of betrothal, validity of marriage, or temporary separation of the spouses with all their ensuing legal consequences. Any decision of the Episcopal Court becomes final only after thirty days have elapsed following its communication. The persons concerned have the right within this period to ask for a review of the case (Diconomia art. 94) or to appeal against the decision (see translation of a divorce in Appendix 9).

Articles 67-69 of the Charter are those administered by the Episcopal Courts in dealing with matrimonial cases mainly marriage and divorce.

#### Legal regulation on Marriage

According to Karavokirou (1901:55) the requirements for the celebration of a valid marriage were in the first half of the 20th century.

the free consent of the parties to the marriage.

the attainment of the minimum age which under the canon law was 12 for the woman and 14 for the man. This minimum age, however, has been changed by the encyclical of 29 June 1935 of the then Locum Tenens of the Archbishopric (which contains the synodical decisions in this respect) to 16 as a minimum for both men and women and 60 as the maximum for women and 70 for men.

the absence of any impediment to the marriage of which those connected with relationship are now defined by Article 70 of the Charter.

The performing of a religious ceremony by a priest of the Orthodox Church.

An indication of the importance of the Bishop's decision in the area of marriage is the fact that apart from the other canonical requirements a licence from the competent Bishop is required for the valid celebration of the marriage; if it is not obtained the marriage is void. As mentioned above impediments to the celebration of a valid marriage are defined by Article 70, which deals with matters of relationship; that is, relationship by blood up to the sixth degree, relationship by affinity up to the fifth degree and relationships to the third generation up to the third degree (4) constitute an impediment to marriage. With regard to the spiritual relationship marriage is prohibited between godfather and goddaughter or mother or daughter and between the son or father of the godfather and the aforementioned three persons. Also, a marriage of an Orthodox Christian with a member of another Christian Church is only permitted on condition that the marriage ceremony will take place in accordance with the rites of the Orthodox Church and be governed by its Law and, furthermore, that a declaration by the persons to be married will be filed with the Bishopric to the effect that the children will be christened in accordance with the Orthodox creed of the Church (Article 70).

Legal regulations concerning divorce

Divorce can be granted and the marriage can be considered dissolved only after a decision has been taken by the competent Ecclesiastical Court, which is presided over by the Bishop or his representative. (Article 224). It must be stressed here, however, that although divorce is undesirable in the Orthodox perspective it is not impossible, as in the Catholic Church. The declared intention of the Church is to make it difficult, so that spouses will not go into marriage lightly and will put an effort into sustaining the relationship. The line of the Church of Cyprus was supported by lawyers and prominent politicians of the country; so much so that K. Tornaritis, a prominent lawyer of Cyprus in 1924 and the attorney general in 1979, wrote when a draft was presented to him for discussion:

The only thing that should seriously preoccupy the legislator is the possible extent that divorce may take. Marriage ... is mainly a moral institution and is based on mutual love and respect between the spouses, but it does not refer only to them but also to the general social interest. The family is based on marriage .... Social organisation is based on healthy marriage ... If divorce is granted easily then social organisation will be dissolved. (K K (Herald) 19/1/1924 as quoted in Tornaritis 1976).



b) The contemporary powers of the Church

In this section I shall argue that through its institutions and practices outside formal courts the Orthodox Church of Cyprus exercises considerable influence on the social life of the country and affects Greek Cypriot women, by regulating their lives and reproducing their comparative powerlessness.

One of the ways, for example, that the Church is involved in producing a person's identity and biography is through rituals and customs, a primary example of which has been the dowry system. This system implies a proper way of doing things, which reinforces the authority of the Church and its power over sexual, social and economic relations.

I will expand on the dowry contract and its content below. Here are some examples of Church rituals and forms which afford it power over people's lives, and the perpetuation of established social practices and relations. 'Agiastos' is a special ceremony conducted at the beginning of special events e.g. the beginning of the school year in (primary and secondary) schools and colleges, the inauguration of new offices and factories, the launching of a ship, the blessing of the new home etc. The priest, or bishop, or even

Archbishop in some cases, who is offering the prayers has to act in a certain way in the process of giving the prayers to God; that is, he must have a branch of basil to sprinkle the holy water over the audience - the passive 'participants' who on their part have to react in a certain way, make the symbol of the cross and kiss the holy icon and the priest's hand (a symbol of full submission) at a prescribed moment.

Similarly, certain rituals are followed during the Easter festivals and processions.

As well as these visible rituals social time is also structured by the Greek Orthodox Church. The most important Church holidays are holidays for the whole population. The 'panegyria' (festivals on a saint's name day) are usually attended by large numbers of people, especially from the celebrating community. This structure of the year is also true for each person's biography (that is the rituals connected with a person's life). The Church follows and regulates the life of a Greek Cypriot from birth to death and imposes its presence in people's life and consciousness.

The pregnant woman is continuously advised to attend masses, to pray to the Holy Mother for an 'easy'

delivery and have her as an example. She is also urged by the priest and her family to take Holy Communion when nearing the time to give birth and to turn to God and the Holy Mother for help during labour, promising devotion, or special material offerings to the Church.

A few days after birth the newborn infant is taken to Church for the first time by the father and an old woman, a relative, not the polluting mother to get God's blessing via the priest, the representative or mediator of God on earth. The baby is brought back to Church after a few months to be baptised and become a true Orthodox Christian. This newcomer into the Christian Faith is only accepted as a member of the Orthodox Christian community after the rituals surrounding baptism have taken place in the solemn but very material atmosphere of an Orthodox church. The spiritual role of the godfather is made material by the high price he has to pay to the Church as fees for the ceremony.

Furthermore, every ritual that takes place in Church, or with the involvement of the Church, results in the faithful being asked to pay a set amount of money as fees, and most Christians feel morally obliged to offer more, because it is for a holy purpose, for the Church.

During illnesses or any other difficulties during the child's upbringing, some parents still turn to the Church first, even before going to the doctor. They pray, seek help, comfort and cure from their favoured Saint and in return they make their material offering large candles or wax portraits, statues, gold sovereigns or land and other property have all been offered to Churches and monasteries.

Rural people especially rely on the Church, their favoured Saint and the clergy during their difficulties.

In major disasters like war, earthquakes or drought, special masses are held to offer God full submission and dependence through prayers and by stressing that his people, his Orthodox Christians, are now in his hands. The powerful God will be asked to solve people's problems. 'We are in your hands Almighty God'. Here religion is material and cosmological. Regular visits to monasteries are part of the planned outings of the family especially if the family is facing a special kind of problem and they want to pray for support and divine solutions to their problems.

At other main events in a Greek Cypriot's life such as engagement and marriage, the Church is present with

its ecclesiastical laws regulating these events. For example the engagement certificate (see Appendix 3 doc.1 ) is a prerequisite according to Church regulations on family law for both partners and it has to be presented to the priest who will conduct the ceremony. This 'Freedom certificate' declaring that an individual is not attached to anybody by marriage issued by the Archbishopric of Cyprus is filled in with all details about the applicant from the priest of the neighbourhood to which the applicant belongs and has to be certified also by the Central offices of the Church; this is a well organised bureaucracy that receives a fixed amount of money after each seal of approval. Document 2 of Appendix 3 has the serial No. 010145 and the logo of the Archbishopric of Cyprus at the top. It is a certificate of Marriage and gives details of where, when and by whom the marriage was conducted; it has the seal of the Archbishopric and also the amount of the fees taken for issuing the certificate. Another example worth mentioning here as an element of the contemporary powers of the Church is the Dowry contract which is a valid legal agreement between members of the Orthodox Christian Church. It has been legalised by section 25(1) followed by amendments and finally consolidated in 1959. The contract law confirmed the traditional power of the

dowry agreement to regulate the amount of the property to be transferred through marriage, and the manner of its transfer.

The dowry contract has to be signed in front of the priest before the engagement or in some cases before the marriage ceremony. The 'proper way' involves, for example, all interested parties being present and entails the groom saying for the sake of the priest to hear "let us not need to open this contract again", when he is handed the only copy to keep for his own reference. This proper way of conducting the dowry ritual and similarly other religious rituals and beliefs have come to be taken for granted: the way it is done is 'common sense'. The dowry contract is not an empty ritual; its forms and contents display and reproduce patriarchal relations legitimated by the Church. The dowry system as a whole is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The dowry system especially in Rural Cyprus shows the implication of the power relationships of Church, State and Patriarchy on rural Cypriot women. The dowry is one of the forms through which patriarchy regulates Cypriot women and reproduces their relative impotence. The dowry contract is not an empty ritual; its forms and contents display patriarchal relations legitimated by Church and State. Women's status is determined by

their parent's financial ability to dower them well. Thus the dowry system has a tremendously serious effect on women's notions of their own identity. For every young woman her father's economic position is much more crucial than it is for a young son; whom she marries, her standard of living, and the fulfilment or not of her dreams in life, her own status and prestige, all depend on how well her father can provide for her and not on her own personal qualities. Most Cypriot women, especially rural women are moved from one family to another, as part of the property being transferred. This is sometimes 'explained' and justified by writers on the subject, usually male, claiming that women gain power by bringing their own dowry into the marriage and making their own economic contribution. In fact my research in Horio shows that this is not how Horio women, and by implication other rural women, experience or express their transmission as bearers of property; because of the importance attributed to the dowry system and its effect on women's identity the next chapter is devoted to a detailed discussion of it.

d) Ideologies and Images

All religions as indicated above establish a doctrinal discourse regarding gender, particularly women as well as their specific legitimated practices and rituals. Christianity offers and in all its practices insists on a subordinate, passive, private, home-based role for women, whose main identity is linked to reproduction, domesticity and family life. Social identities (including legal rights) are thus formed and sustained in part by religious belief. These vary according to the society in question and social strata; on the one hand for example women may be actively engaged in evangelism, charity and philanthropy, but on the other, acceptance and resignation may be seen as paramount virtues:

The more a society is dependent on the vagaries of fate and the natural environment, the more that society tends to operate with taboos which invariably function to polarise and regulate the relationships between the sexes. In Ireland in the 1920s and 30s an almost maniacal hatred of women was expressed by many Catholic Bishops and priests who saw in women a cause for the decline in the sexual morality which they feared so much.

(Henderson 1979:10)

Such attitudes are not simply doctrinal; they result in restricted participation of women. For example, in the Orthodox Church of Cyprus there has always been a strong tradition of keeping the sexes apart in Church



ceremonies and gatherings with the women always at the far end of the building in the 'women's gallery'; the reason behind this practice was that women should not be near the Holy Icons and the Holy Communion in order not to contaminate them by their presence, especially if they were going through their menstrual period. Apart from that the Church segregated men and women, with the men at the front and the women at the back of the sanctuary of the Church because women were seen not only as polluting the holiness of the temple but also as temptresses. Men came to Church to communicate with God. Women were not allowed to belong to the active congregation, or the church choir or to hold icons during processions or other services, or even to enter the sanctuary. Women always had to wait for the men to leave the Church first, after the holy-icons, in Easter or other processions and had to enter the Church through separate doors and sit in different pews. In these ways the internalisation of their inferior status was secured. The Church functioned in such a way as to polarise and regulate the relationship between the sexes, and not only inside the Church. The criticism from a priest during confession was the most heavy one on a woman's conscience.

The Church generally is against all sex outside marriage and churchmen, like other traditionally-minded people, are very suspicious of all contacts between men and women who are not married to each other. Sexual taboos are associated with traditional, pure societies and focus on the value placed on the purity and virginity of women. More generally to dance in pairs, called "European dancing", which meant bodily contact with a member of the other sex, to wear a low-neck, sleeveless summer dress, or even to laugh and be at ease in front of men, were all characterised by the church as immoral and severely criticised by teachers in schools and preachers in the church. Greek Cypriot women were and still are expected to be chaste, modest and virginal and to appear docile in public in order to maintain a good reputation in the eyes of everybody. Many Cypriot youngsters, male and female, grew up with a church-supported fear and hatred of female sexuality that led to a polarisation of the sexes.

The Icon of the 'Panagia', the Holiest of the Holy, Virgin Mary, as well as other female saints, symbolise women as chaste, virginal, loving and always sacrificing themselves by giving to husbands and children, to God and society. This cult that has arisen around the Virgin Mary was an instrument for

inculcating in women humility, patience and subservience. And in Cyprus it has worked very well for centuries, creating the ideal woman: the mother, wife, housewife: the Greek Orthodox Cypriot woman, that every female should aspire to be, as compared with the alternative image of Eve, the temptress.

### 3.4 Other influences of the Church

Churchmen are present at all important social functions. The traditional practice of having the priest at the head of the table - the highest status position at a dinner gives an idea of the privileged position of the clergy stemming from the hegemonic ideology of religion. To start with the most common practices and images of the presence of the priests and religion in general in the educational system, we find that, as mentioned on page 133 above, every September the opening of the schools is preceded by a special Mass, the Agiasmos - Blessing Ceremony. All the elements of the ceremony, the prayers, the holy water, the basil plant have a symbolism that mediate religious beliefs. Nursery children of 3 or 4 years of age as well as adult student teachers at the teachers training college go through this process every year.

Clerics are particularly active in the everyday affairs of local rural communities, and to the extent that these bodies are able to act as pressure groups like the Men's and Women's religious clubs, clerics hold an important position in the community. (5) Through these grass-roots organisations the clergy succeeds in elevating the image of the Church as the charitable organisation which has under its umbrella all those who suffer, all those who search for the truth. The Orthodox code is further reinforced in everyday life, by all these means. This is illustrated through the women's lives in both rural and urban contexts, as will be shown in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

The presence of the Church is also visible in people's everyday lives in the many small temples and monasteries scattered in the mountains and at crossroads at strategic places along scenic routes, or on hill-tops. The parish churches are always visible for many miles; they seem to tower in most cases over the hills. Such massive shapes and numbers of the monasteries and churches all over the island show the overwhelming importance and position that the Church acquired in Cyprus.

Some people argue that those Greek Cypriots who belong to the educated, professional and commercial classes - who in a sense constitute the ruling elite - are not in general religious people; they do not often go to Church and their pursuit of material comfort and prestige is hardly in line with Church teaching. Since full-scale empirical research has not yet been undertaken to support or oppose this argument the suspicion among some Cypriot academics, especially those from conservative backgrounds, is that the Church is more influential with rural people who generally have little influence on the government. Basing my argument on the fieldwork I did in both rural and urban Cyprus, I will argue that even the elite group gives special consideration to Church rituals which keep them on good terms with the 'Church establishment' - their natural allies; for example priests or bishops or even the Archbishop are invited to perform the wedding ceremony of a rich businessman's son (cf. Case study U.37 who married well and had Archbishop Chrysostomos officiating at her wedding ceremony). Another case I could site here is U.4 who had her engagement and wedding ceremony blessed by Archbishop Makarios because she and her husband, who both claimed to be socialists, came from high-status professional homes. Also, U.47 in 1980 had her local bishop invited into her newly-built

house to give his blessings before the family moved in. Implicit or explicit there is always a Church presence in the minds of most urban people, from all socio-economic classes.

I would go further and assert that even members of the executive of the Cypriot Communist Party, let alone ordinary members, follow Church rituals, obligatory and voluntary, and have never openly as individuals or as a group (30-35% of the voters in the 1980 elections were members of the communist party) actively attacked Church rituals and interests. I must stress here again the fact that church ideology pervades all aspects of life and that Church power and influence makes open attack on it extremely counter-productive for any political party which could find the strength to challenge the Church.

The power of the Church, is extended and 'doubled' by the division of labour between canon law and the ecclesiastical courts and secular law and the Republic's courts; the church speaks of and for all matters connected with the personal, domestic, family life and to some extent speaks for the locality, especially in rural areas. Church domination means that crucial areas of Greek-Cypriot life are organised in a completely undemocratic way. Priests and Bishops

are not selected by the faithful after all; they are appointed from above - they are an 'elect' not elected! Since no woman can be a priest or bishop (and thus cannot sit in ecclesiastical courts) a major area of law (and what is in fact political practice) is dominated by men a further political illustration of patriarchal relations.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

1. Modern Greek Cypriot historians like Alastos D. 1975 and Persianis P. 1978 give information about the strong presence of the Church in Cypriot life.

2. In Surridge, R.J. 1931. 'A Survey of Rural life in Cyprus,' Nicosia Government Printing Office.

3. As already mentioned in chapter 2 the church sold some of its property to modernise the rest of it where applicabl; in this way it took part in the modernisation process that flourished during the 1960s and early 70s.

4. 'Trigeneia', that is, blood relationship up to the third degree is one of the impediments to the celebration of a valid marriage.

5. Clerics in all social gatherings in rural or urban settings, even if not respected as personalities themselves they are still given the most important position before or after the government representative. Also the OXEN (wome's) and the OOI(men's) Christian societies are higly considered by members of the rural communities.



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## CHAPTER 4: PATRIARCHY, DOWRY AND WOMEN'S IDENTITY

### 4.1 The Dowry as a Formal Institution

### 4.2 The Legal Form of the Dowry Contract

### 4.3 Formal Rituals and Ceremonies

### 4.4 Dowry in Relation to the Social Identity of Women

(a) The different consequences for men and women

(b) The different consequences for rich and poor  
women

(c) The different consequences for rural and urban  
women (i) Rural women and the dowry  
(ii) Urban women and the dowry

## Conclusion

# ΠΡΟΙΚΟΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΝ

Ἀρ. 00617

ORIGINAL DOWRY CONTRACT

PHOTOCOPIED FROM THE  
CHURCH REGISTER BOOK  
WITH THE PERMISSION  
OF THE DISTRICT  
BISHOP AND THE PRIEST  
OF THE VILLAGE.

Translations of similar documents can be found in appendices for chapter 4.

The legal form of such documents gives them a special position in the discussion of Greek Cypriot women's identity, as this chapter will argue.

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→ 2

Μεταξύ *Ιωάννη* *Ευέλ* *Μαρίνης* *Αρ*  
*Κ* *Β*  
γονέων, ἀδελφῶν, συγγενῶν τῆς *Σταυρ* *Καρ*  
καλουμένων ἐν τοῖς ἐφεξῆς προικοδοτῶν, ἀφ' ἐνός καὶ τῶν *Παναγ* *Σ.Τ*  
*Μαρίνης* *Παρ* *Παναγ*

ἐκ *Μαρίνης* *Παναγ* καλουμένων ἐν τοῖς ἐφεξῆς προικοληπτῶν, ἀφ' ἑτέρου  
συνεφωνήθησαν τὰ ἀκόλουθα:

Λογ) Οἱ ἄνω προικοδοτῶν, προκειμένου ἢ *Σταυρ* *Καρ*  
ἐκ *Β* *Κ* *Παναγ* *Νικητ* *Παναγ*  
κατὰ τοὺς θείους καὶ ἱεροὺς κανόνες τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἀνατολικῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας μετὰ τοῦ  
ὡσαύτως εἰς *Παναγ* γάμον ἐρχομένου *Νικητ* *Παναγ*  
ἐκ *Κ* *Π* *Κ* *Π*  
συνιστῶσιν ὡς προῖκα ὑπὲρ τῆς ρηθείας

*Συγκαρὰς* *μας* ἐκτός τῶν ἐπ' οἰόματι αὐτῆς ὑπαρχόντων, τὰ ἀκόλουθα:

1) *Χίμας* *Χίμας* *δι' ἀγοράν* *κατασκευῶν* *Μαρίνης*  
*ὑποκαίωσαν* *διὰ* *ἐκτίμησιν* *μαχαλοῦ.*  
2) *τὴν* *κατασκευῶν* *ἐκτίμησιν* *Μαρίνης* *χωρὶς*

Βον) Οἱ *Παναγ* *Σ.Τ* *Μαρίνης* *Παρ*  
*Παν* *Κ* *Π*  
γονεῖς τοῦ *Κ.Μ.* δεχόμεθα νὰ μνηστεύσωμεν τὸν υἱὸν μας (ἀδελφόν, ἀναψιόν)

Νικηφόρος Ταν. έκ κ  
καί να νυμφεύσωμεν μετὰ τῆς Σοφίας κωρ  
ὑποσχόμεθα δὲ νὰ δώσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν ἑκτὸς τῶν ἐπ' ὀνοματί του ὑπαρχόντων, ὡς προῖκα τὰ ἀκόλουθα:  
Τὸ ἀναγοχαίν μαρτίδιον.

Γον) Ὁ γάμος ἐκ συμφώνου ὀρίζεται ὅπως τελεσθῇ μέχρι τῆς 30/8/1967 τὸ ἀργότερον.  
Δον) Ἡ Σοφία κωρ έκ Β/Γ.Α.Σ  
συμφωνεῖ καὶ δέχεται νὰ τελέῃ τοὺς γάμους τῆς συμφώνως πρὸς τοὺς ὅρους τοῦ παρόντος  
προικοσυμφώνου μετὰ τοῦ εἰρημένου Νικηφόρου Π.Α.Κ.

Εον) Ὁ Νικηφόρος Ταν έκ κ  
δηλοῖ ὅτι νύχαραιστήθη διὰ τὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρημένης Σοφίας κ  
ἐκ Β/Γ.Α.Σ  
συσταθείσαν προῖκα καὶ συμφωνεῖ καὶ δέχεται νὰ τελέσῃ τοὺς  
γάμους του μετ' αὐτῆς συμφώνως πρὸς τοὺς ὅρους τοῦ παρόντος προικοσυμφώνου.

Τὸ παρὸν προικοσύμφωνον ἀνεγνώσθη καὶ ἀφοῦ κατενοήθη καλῶς ὑφ' ὅλων τῶν συμβελλομένων  
ὑπεγράφη ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ τῶν μαρτύρων.  
Τὸ πρωτότυπον παρέμεινε παρὰ τῷ ἐφημερίῳ, τῷ τελέσαντι τὴν μνηστείαν τῶν ἐνδιαφερομένων, ἐ-  
δόθη δὲ εἰς τὰ συμβαλλόμενα μέρη ἀντίγραφον τούτου.

Ἐν τῇ 14/8/ 1966

Μάρτυρες

1) Α.  
2) Β. Χ.

Οἱ Συμβελλόμενοι



#### CHAPTER FOUR: PATRIARCHY, DOWRY AND WOMEN'S IDENTITY

In this chapter I discuss the way in which the dowry system, which involves a legal contract signed before a priest and recognized by the State, illustrates the power relationships between the Church and the State, reinforcing the patriarchal structure of society, and the way in which the interaction between them affects the identity of women, especially in rural Cyprus.

I argue that the power of Church and State over the family, and therefore over women, operates through the persistence in Cyprus of the dowry system - formally until November, 1979, and informally after that date. One general observation that emerges from my work is that patriarchy works through various specific forms, one of which is the dowry, to regulate Cypriot women and reproduce their relative powerlessness. I shall further argue that one of the ways the church is involved in a person's sense of identity and biography is through ritual and custom, of which the dowry system is again an example. This system implies a proper way that things have to be done:

the dowry negotiations take place between the two family heads with the assistance of the intermediary person;

the dowry contract has to be signed in front of the priest before the engagement or in some cases the

marriage ceremony;

the proper way, as was seen in the last chapter, involves all interested parties being present and entails the groom saying "let us not need to open this contract again", when he is handed the only copy (the reference copy) to keep for his own benefit.

This proper way has come almost to be identified with common sense - "there has to be a dowry, what kind of a marriage can last without a dowry?" or "it is of course necessary to give a dowry to your daughter and make a contract for it, so that the groom will be sure you will keep your promises".

The arranged marriage, even in the modified form in which it exists today, is perceived (Nikita, 1978) as being closely linked with the dowry system, both being part of that family formation which has an enormous effect on the identity of Greek Cypriot women.

This chapter is informed by interviews with women of various ages, ranging from 15 to 75, from Horio, my rural setting. These women talk about their views on the dowry system itself, and their own experiences immediately prior to getting married, including the dowry negotiations that took place and their own feelings at the time. I also use thirty handwritten original dowry contracts photocopied from the Church register during my fieldwork. These cover the period



1930-75 and give very detailed statements of the agreements between the two contracting families or heads of households. It was clear to me that marriage and dowry were the main issues these rural women wanted to speak about. Indeed this need to talk about it illustrates the social cost of the dowry for women (1).

#### 4.1 The Dowry as a Formal Institution

The dowry is the movable and immovable property that the two parties, the groom and the bride, will bring into marriage. The two families involved consider it their duty to offer this property as a gift to the young couple, as financial assistance towards their material needs during the first years of marriage. In contemporary rural Cyprus, the dowry takes the form of a house for the newly weds, land and/or money, animals, and the 'trousseau' (proitzia) which includes all sorts of household items from bed sheets and embroidered table clothes, to kitchen utensils and furniture.

There were variations in the tradition throughout Cyprus as to who provides what, and onto whose shoulders the major burden of building the house falls. The general pattern was that the girl's father should provide the newly built house, unless he was very poor; in this case, the father of the groom was morally obliged to help, provided that he was in a better financial position. Today, again speaking on the general level, a prospective groom expects to be given a newly built modern house and he is seen as successful if he manages

to marry a woman who owns her own house and also has some extra attraction, such as a good salary, or other forms of wealth.

He is seen to have made a pre-condition for his marriage. The bigger the dowry he gets, the higher his prestige. (Nikita 78:113)

All this emphasises that the family is still the most significant structural and cultural element of Greek Cypriot society. Values and beliefs about family life are guarded carefully and have proved to be very enduring. Ownership of a home and land are still seen as of paramount importance.

Cyprus is a peripheral capitalist society, but a very competitive one. It still has a mainly agricultural economy with a class system that is embryonic if compared with that of Western societies. Land still constitutes a significant investment. Crops can be raised and the family income in rural Cyprus depends on exploiting the land two or even three times in a year: wheat and grain in winter, green vegetables in summer, and potatoes and olives in early autumn; since land is of such great importance to the economic life of the island, and since the land belongs mainly to a large number of individual families, rather than to big land owners (2) the transference of land plays a significant role in the life of a rural family along with the transference of other movable and immovable property.

It is difficult to establish the origins of the dowry system, which is condemned by some and accepted as inevitable by others, but it is possible to investigate the effects and implications of its existence on both the male and female population of the island.

It seems to me that the social values of Greek Cypriot society pertaining to marriage and the transference of property are neither self generating nor god-given but that their roots, and the reasons for their persistence, are to be sought in the history, culture and economy of the island. Women in most cultures, especially in Mediterranean countries, are seen as the key to economic resources both as labourers and as reproducers of further resources. Perceived and implicitly recognised as being immensely important for the collective, whether community, society or nation, they become valuable resources for prestige, esteem and wealth.

The dowry system has been explained by some researchers as an example of the wielding by women of economic, and by extension of domestic power: through the dowry contract they bring land into the newly established household, and since by law they can formally maintain control of both the land and their home, which produce the income and provide shelter for the family, then, so the argument goes, women possess power and are not discriminated against by the dowry system. It is assumed that, especially in the cases where the newly married

couple moves into the home of the wife's parents, in which case the man is called a sogambros, men lack public prestige and that decision making is shared, if not completely taken over by the wife.

#### 4.2 The legal form of the dowry contract

According to Section 25(1) of the contract law of Cyprus Cap.149, an agreement made without consideration is void unless, among other exceptions:

...it is expressed in writing and signed by the party to be charged therewith and is made on account of natural love and affection between parties standing in a near relation to each other.(3)

In this case such an agreement is a contract. That is to say, it is actionable and can be enforced, through a court of law, by the person to whom the promise has been given. For example, a son-in-law or a daughter can take the father to court, if he does not comply with the promises he made in the dowry contract.

Contract law in Cyprus is based on English Common Law, and follows the same general principles as to what makes a contract valid. The dowry contract was introduced by the British in response to local circumstances and long standing traditions, creating a legally binding contractual obligation where none existed before. Not only was a contract introduced but a clause was made

necessary that the contract was to be circulated through the Church and be signed before the engagement or marriage ceremony. The presence of the priest alongside the other two witnesses adds to the moral force of the contract. The dowry contract became obligatory in practice, since the priest would refuse to proceed with the engagement ceremony unless this contract had been signed.

I would like at this point to comment on the usage of the terms 'betrothal', 'engagement' and 'dowry'. Betrothal is a commitment to wed, normally made in the context of an arranged marriage but not necessarily so. The Greek Cypriot dialect expression for it (logiasmata) means 'they gave their solemn word'. Engagement is a much more formal procedure, involving the exchanging of rings and all the rituals and religious ceremonies, and implies a legal commitment to wed. The consent of the parents, guardians, advisers and extended family in general is customarily necessary. Dowry in Cyprus is involved in both betrothal and formal engagement, and deals explicitly with the crucial issue of property settlement.

#### 4.3 Formal Rituals and Ceremonies

The general pattern of the rituals surrounding the dowry agreement, as described by most of the participants in my fieldwork, and by other researchers in the subject, including Nikita (1978), Friedl (1962), Peristianis

(1964), Loizos (1975) and Kenna (1971), is as follows:

The negotiations will have taken place in advance and the parents (usually the two fathers if they are both alive) will have come to an agreement about the value of the dowry to be given and will have proceeded to arrange the engagement of the two young interested parties. The procedure itself is usually a formal one, at which all the verbal decisions are now put into writing, and sanctioned and made legal by the signing of the contract. It is unlikely that objections will be voiced at this moment, or, if they do arise, that they will be allowed to disrupt the festivities of the engagement ceremony. "It is too late; people know..."

Since the early fifties, the agreement itself has been formalised and takes the form of a typed document (see Appendix A, Doc.1) to be completed in the presence of the priest who will be conducting the ceremony. This is an essential feature of the authentication by witnesses of the dowry agreements. The religious presence at the signing of this document gives the moment an atmosphere of solemnity and respect.

Usually, the two sets of parents, two independent witnesses (in most cases relatives of the couple) and the priest retreat to a corner of the room, or to another quiet room away from the guests, and

once the contract has been written, it is read aloud and then signed by all parties involved. If everything goes well, wishes for the future happiness of the new couple are exchanged, and the priest gives a copy of the contract to the groom; the original is kept in the church register.

It was customary in traditional Cyprus for the groom at this point to express the wish that the relationship with his in-laws will not be disturbed and that there will be no need to open the contract again. He can refer to it, of course, if the dowry has not been prepared as agreed before the marriage ceremony. He has to say "may it be useless" - that is, let us keep our promises and avoid any problems. If no dowry contract has been produced and signed by all the interested parties, before the ceremony, the priest should ask the interested parties in front of witnesses if they want to make a dowry contract, and should record their statement in writing; this then has to be signed by the couple before the engagement ceremony is performed. As Nikita says:

Church law prescribes this procedure in accordance with a synodal decree of the church of Cyprus. The justification of this institution consists in minimising the likelihood of disputes during the engagement years...A formal dowry contract became necessary in order to bind the father of the bride to his obligations to the bridegroom

particularly in regard to the building of the house.(1978:114)

For the reader interested in the details of the dowry contracts, appendix 4.2, documents 1-6, contain a blank contract form and the actual dowry contracts of some of my participants, excluding only names and other details that might lead to the identification of the people in question.

#### 4.4 The Dowry in Relation to the Social Identity of Women

Dowry is the result of a bargain and has a specific intention: that of linking the daughter hence her family with a particularly desirable son-in-law (Yalman, N. 1967:175).

In agricultural Cyprus the dowry is traditionally seen as coming from two sources, though in unequal parts: the bride's family and the groom's family. Property merges in this generation, and is expected to become a single block of property to serve as a source of income for the new family unit and to be redistributed 'equally' to all children in the next generation.

Keeping up appearances and paying attention to public opinion are very important aspects of Cypriot society. As Durkheim said (4), in such a society every individual is very sensitive to the opinions of others about themselves. The evaluation and assessment of a man's



life in Cyprus, his activities and achievement reflects upon the honour of all the members of his household and extended family. As in Greece:

He is judged on how near he has come to the ideal of economic self sufficiency, on how well his sons married, on how well his daughters were dowered.

(Kenna, 1971:14)

Among Greek Cypriots the dowry is still seen as the ultimate responsibility of the father, and in cases where he dies before marrying the daughter, it becomes that of the unmarried or married brothers, or even the mother if there are no sons old enough to dower the daughter. Few girls, especially before the 1974 war, expected to marry without at least a token dowry, of land or cash, as a help towards building the new house for the newly weds. This is still expected as a necessary prerequisite for marriage to take place - that is, it is part of how prospective brides are 'valued'.

Πρώτη μητέρα: Έχω γιό κι έχω χαρά  
Που θα γίνω πεθερά.

Δεύτερη μητέρα: Έχω κόρη κι έχω πίκρα  
Που θα γνέθω μέρα νύχτα.

First mother: I have a son, and I'm happy, since soon  
I'll become a mother-in-law.

Second mother: I have a daughter and I feel bitter  
because I'll have to prepare her dowry,  
working day and night. (Twentieth century  
folk poem).

In these few words, and with the stark contrast between their feelings and their future prospects, the two mothers in this traditional folk song express the differentiation between the two sexes in the Greek speaking world. They recognise, that is, the hardship that a girl imposes on her mother simply by being born a woman and therefore needing a trousseau and a dowry. The boy's mother expresses her sense of triumph at having given birth to a male, while the girl's mother gives vent to the worries and anxieties that attend the parents from the day the female child is born to the day she is married.

It may be argued that this is merely a folk song that is now out of date, and that things have changed. I would argue, on the basis of my fieldwork in Cyprus and of the various discussions on the dowry that have taken place through the press, or at a variety of meetings (5), that the tradition survives with variations and, in its modified form, keeps its moral force. Inequality lies at the very root of the custom by which a woman's parents have to provide her with a dowry for her to find a husband equal to her status. The practice of the dowry institutionalises the different effects of the dowry on men and women.

Men are the 'darlings' of this social system. But there are not only different consequences for men and women, but also for rich and poor, rural and urban women.

(a) The Different consequences for men and women

The Greek laws of inheritance require that property must be divided equally between sons and daughters alike. The daughters are entitled to their share at marriage, in the form of land and cash, or a house, while the sons inherit their share of land after their father's death. The Greek Civil Code, (Section 1895), has a specific provision stating that "educational expenses beyond those normally to be expected from the economic position of the family may be counted as part of the inheritance." Both the legal code and the village custom recognise that by educating the sons the family offers them improved status and, by succeeding in their education and obtaining a prestigious occupation, usually in the cities, the sons become the agents of upward social mobility for the family. The education of the son is always given priority over that of the daughter, however bright she may be. The son is given preference because he is more likely to increase the income of his family of origin when through his education he gets a good job. Moreover, he raises the social position of the whole family through the status of his job. On the other hand, by educating the son, the father releases property because sons relinquish part, if not all, of their inheritance rights to the family property, thereby recognising the expenses their family

has incurred to educate them (See below, Dowry vs Education).

The property to which rights are relinquished in this way is added to the girl's dowry, with the aim of attracting a son-in-law with more 'points' (in the terminology of the marriage market); the family thus gains in prestige in two ways: firstly because of the son's upward mobility, and secondly through the improved status of the daughter's marriage.

(b) The different consequences for rich and poor women

All over the Greek and Greek Cypriot world, large dowries compensate for other, personal deficiencies, even in cases of loss of honour, which is a very sensitive issue. An important question that arises here is whether Cypriot society is so materialistic as to accept that the violation of one of its most basic moral precepts can be compensated for in cash. I now turn to the question of honour and shame in relation to dowry and wealth, because I believe it clearly reveals the discriminatory practices of Cypriot society.

During her fieldwork Friedl (1976) studied the practice of the dowry system in Vasilika and saw the dowry negotiations as analogous to commercial transactions. This recalls the Greek Cypriot sayings "He got rid of her cheaply", or "He sold her cheaply". Most parents want to marry their daughters well and so they give a lot of thought and consideration to every proposal from

a marriage intermediary, whether a relative or a non relative. When the proceedings reach the delicate stage of negotiations about the dowry, the groom, who is usually present and takes part in the discussions, will refer in some cases to the minimum value of the dowry he expects and the form in which he prefers it: land, cash, animals and so on. Even if she is "of some age" - that is, even if she is older than the conventional age limit for marriage, a rich bride might be given a newly built, fully furnished house, in anticipation of a prospective husband.

(c) The different consequences for rural and urban Women

(i) Rural women and the dowry

I turn now to the way in which the individual woman is affected by the dowry system and argue that, from the microsociological point of view, the dowry system in Cyprus creates serious problems between daughters and fathers, daughters and mothers, brothers and sisters and within whole families.

What does it mean for the individual woman, in terms of her sense of herself, to have to go through the dowry negotiations? Does she see it as a humiliating process? How does she feel about the idea that she is a burden to her parents, and that she herself has no value, since property has to be added to make her worth marrying? What about her life as an adolescent and young woman? What kind of restrictions does she have to suffer in order to assist the bargaining process for the marriage,

in which her chastity is a prerequisite to the marriage settlement, and is also an asset that lowers the amount of dowry asked by the groom?

The gossip that spreads when a girl is born instead of a boy carries the implication that a girl is a burden to her family. especially if she is the second, or worse still the third daughter. The worries ( ) about her start from the moment the midwife shows the newly born child to the father and assures him "Yes!! It's not a mistake; it's a girl, it's a female".

The newly born girl thus starts life branded by the very language used because of her gender. She is considered a 'net economic loss' for the family. In the villages, the congratulations on the birth of a healthy baby are frequently followed by the comment: "It's his turn now" - implying that the father will now have to work harder to save for his daughter's dowry.

Folk songs sung at religious festivals by the wandering singers of Cyprus (the politarides) refer to the tradition of the dowry with anger against young suitors who, whatever their capabilities, profession or personal qualities, run after a house and, before enquiring about the girl and her qualities, ask for a newly built modern house with all conveniences and amenities This is expected even if they themselves do point? not even have underwear to put on their naked bodies:

Τζι ο πόσιει έναν ρέμπελον εν να βουρήσει  
 τζαι πριν την κοπελλούαν δει σπίτιν εν να  
 ζητήσσει

"Build a house for me", the son-in-law says, "if  
 you don't want me to go away and leave your  
 daughter".

The father flies into a rage and curses the moment he  
 opened his house to this shameful lad. All the poorer  
 people live with the dread that they might be humiliated  
 by their sons-in-law and curse the moment they gave  
 birth to a girl. (Appendix 4.B contains two extended  
 examples of these attitudes, taken from my fieldwork)

The fact that the woman is seen as a problem and a  
 burden to the family has enormous consequences for her  
 whole life. Parents prefer to deprive them of an  
 education in order to save the money and build a house  
 for them. One of my participants, a 23 year old woman  
 from Horio, recalls with some bitterness:

#### Dowry vs Education

My two older brothers went to the Gymnasium  
 (Secondary School) and as soon as they left they  
 found very good jobs; one works in the Civil  
 Service, the other in a bank. Both of them married  
 well and have houses in the town and cars. I was  
 very good at school in all my subjects, especially  
 in maths. The teacher assured my father that if he

were to send me to the secondary school I would be a very good student and receive a grant for the whole of my school career. "You will not pay any fee" the teacher told him. But my father's answer was : "My dear teacher, she is a woman...what is she going to do with 'letters'?" After that I acted as their housekeeper until they got me engaged as soon as the first proposal came along. They asked me if I liked the man after I had seen him at a dinner at our house. I liked him and said yes. He is a farmer like my father and has his own machinery and looks after our property. Most of my parents' fields belong to me now because my brothers have been educated and are not very interested in land.(R7)

In the context of the rural family, it should be borne in mind that the daughter has to work hard in the fields as well as helping her parents at home, for example, in the making of halloumi (the Cypriot home-made cheese). Most of her time is spent in preparing food, looking after the animals and making her own trousseau. During her adolescent years she has to work hard, and suffers from the pressure to save up her earnings for the dowry house.

A 21 year old Horio woman, the youngest of ten children, five of whom are girls, said:

I finished the primary school with ten out of ten,



and prizes for my excellent conduct, for maths and cooking. My father had decided that I was going to stay at home and help my mother with the housework for a year or two, then follow an apprenticeship with P., the skilled woman we have in the village, and then work in my uncle's factory in the town. Nothing of his plan has changed. I now work in the factory and all my money goes to the cooperative bank for building my dowry house later on. I have to be very careful with how I spend the pocket money my mother or uncle give me every now and then. Who will ask me to marry him without a house? (R9)

The feeling that they are not wanted unless they have a good dowry is very destructive of the self-esteem of these women. With diminished self-respect and self-confidence, they become very dependent economically, emotionally and psychologically, first on their father, and later, if they are not married when he dies, on their brothers. In these circumstances, most Cypriot girls have no strong opinions of their own about themselves as persons, or about the most important subjects affecting their future, such as the choice of the man with whom they will spend the rest of their life. They are governed by the general norms of the society and are psychologically prepared to enter marriage as early as possible and compelled to 'create' feelings of affection for the man presented to them as the best available by the collective (family, kin and

godparents). Arranged marriages at an early age thus serve as a safeguard for the family honour. The dowry adds legal force to the whole system, the real significance and effects of which on individual men and women are obscured by the rationale that it provides the best possible economic security for the woman in case of divorce or the death of her husband. Dowry negotiations are based on the general presumption that women's labour, whether domestic, out in the fields, or in the family business, not to mention the pain and labour of bearing and rearing children, is not work. All these contributions will be offered naturally to the husband without being asked and with no complaints. After all, these tasks are not labelled as 'productive work' anywhere in Cyprus.

This being so the woman has, in order to balance the man's value as a productive head of the household, to bring as her contribution to the marriage a house or cash or land and the trousseau which her mother has been preparing since she was a young child. It is a blessing for the woman to have 'golden hands' and be able to embroider all her own linen so that she can display it on the marital bed in piles as a sign that she is an industrious person, and assure the future husband that he will not have to pay for linen and household goods for years to come.

The house is nonetheless thought to be a necessity in accordance with the cultural rule of 'neolocality' (6);

it is the main and the most expensive part of the dowry. Peter Loizos (1975) claims that both the house and the man's ability to earn are essential to the viability of the domestic group in the long term. The newly established unit, independent, as far as possible, from both sets of parents in economic and residential terms, starts its married life with a competition for status by presenting the decorated house and trousseau to the eyes of the critical public. on the day of the marriage ceremony. Surridge (1930:25) holds the view that the dowry house competes for scarce capital investment needed by agriculture. Indeed for Surridge the dowry system was one of the the main factors leading to village indebtedness. (I also found some evidence to support this - See Appendix B, text 4) On the same issue, P.Loizos (1975:514) says:

One Kalo woman remarked to me: These houses are eating up our fields.

All this accords with the old saying, that was repeated by many women in Horio as a remark about the expensive modern luxurious houses:

You only need a small house to live in. Save your money for buying land.

People rarely follow this advice. Parents sell land in order to build a dowry house that will attract the right suitors for their daughters, and most parents in Horio

are even prepared to get into debt or sell their fields to give their daughters, and especially their eldest, a modern and, if possible, luxurious house so that the family will gain in social prestige, thus helping the other daughters to find a more suitable, a richer or a more educated husband.

An extract from *Excerpta Cypria* (1931), in which marriage in Cypriot peasant society is discussed, reveals some differences in the value of the dowry and the items the woman used to take with her. And Turner (1910), describing a peasant's marriage, says that he takes his wife with nothing more than a wooden box containing the few clothes she may have and would be thought uncommonly fortunate if his father in law was able to give her a mule or a donkey. Parents were not expected to give much because of the poverty that existed under the Ottoman and British Colonial regimes. The woman usually followed the man to his parents' village, where he had built lodgings, or perhaps a new room.

Economic change, increased affluence, a shift in the numbers of men and women of marriagable age, the declining importance of agricultural land as compared with wage labour and certain changes in the social position of women, are the factors that Peter Loizos (1975:10/4) refers to as contributing to the changes in property transfer among Greek Cypriot villagers. He attempts in his article to "relate family decisions to

marriage market pressures" and both to the general economic and demographic constraints.

According to other researchers, such as P.Sant Cassia (1981), the traditional dowry system accounts for the fact that the majority of peasants were continuously in debt between the 1920s and 1950s. They found themselves caught in what was to some extent a self-reproducing cycle, because of the pattern of agricultural production, which required recourse to credit once the income from the year's crops had been consumed. The situation was exacerbated by the tradition that the land should be divided equally amongst the members of the next generation. This system eventually resulted in the plots being so small that they had to be augmented; the only source of new land was that owned by the Church, and to acquire this again drove the villagers to the credit market.

The whole cycle was, however, self-defeating. The demand for repayment by creditors resulted in forced sales of property leaving some of the peasants destitute and landless, with little alternative but to emigrate or sell their labour at harvest time on the estates owned by the village merchants.

The current situation differs from the traditional pattern in terms of the nature and value of the dowry, but the main principles are still there.

b) Urban women

In all the interviews in Poli the question of the dowry arose whenever marriage was discussed, and it was quite clear that the system has continued to 'work' amongst the urban population. Quotations from some of the interviews will demonstrate the continuing strength of the tradition, and also the importance attached by some of the participants to the size of the dowry as a measure of their own prestige in the marriage market. The whole question of the dowry is closely linked to the class position of the woman's family or, if she herself is a working woman, to her work position and salary.

For rich women, a large dowry played the role of the 'material modifier' of the 'ideal' and worked well in some cases, as described by my informants. Large dowries, and education abroad, afforded them the freedom to experience relationships with men without their marriageability being affected. Because of their special status and their economic situation, the rich families can affect ideas and modify representations. They are accepted and are forgiven for any modifications they have brought to the ideal representations. Relevant here is the fact that whereas the basic rules are simple and crude, real situations are more complex. Both men and women, find ways to by-pass these simple rules and to modify them.

Women have been seen by some Mediterranean

anthropologists as the 'repositories' of family histories. This is another expression of the way women are domesticated - that is, identified with the family, and seen as the bearers of family wisdom. Whereas men are seen to belong to public realms, to possess public knowledge, and to move easily between the public and the private domains, women are seen to 'belong' only to the latter. They are used as 'memories' because they are able to make and sustain connections between relatives neighbours and acquaintances. In the context of the dowry, for example, it is the women who make the preliminary contacts and prepare the ground for the negotiations: hence the folk tales and jokes about the 'proxenitra', the woman go-between or match-maker. Firth (1970:139) uses the term 'kin-keepers' of women, and shows that there are advantages in using women in a private, family situation. In both village and town, women - mothers, aunties or other relatives - make known to the neighbourhood that their girl is now at the right age, and that it is desirable that she should find the right man to marry. It is also common for women, in neighbourhood gatherings, to discuss a girl's dowry and trousseau, her educational qualifications and her work prospects or salary. To put it crudely, they are concerned to give information to prospective in-laws, and advertise very subtly the product they want to sell. Since such 'knowledge' is transmitted through gossip between women, no embarrassment is created between men if a proposed marriage fails: the family name is not affected as much as it would have been if the

information had been given by the head of the family: 'women's talk' is not taken in to account, as a 45 year old woman factory worker said to me (U.51). Here is a revealing remark by another woman - an upper middle class lawyer:

When I was studying abroad I had an affair that was known to everybody, including my husband-to-be. When that affair was over and I was back in Cyprus, I got engaged to somebody that I didn't like much and I broke that engagement as well. I didn't care much what Polites were saying about me. I wasn't happy and didn't want to go on with it. My family had a good name and my father's prestige protected me against some of the gossip. My husband didn't mind at all. That's what he said...(she laughs). I'm not sure if it's to my dowry, to my appearance or to his broadmindedness that I have to give credit for that. (U.4)

This woman was very frank with herself and admitted that if her parents had not been as rich and prestigious as they were, she would probably not have dared to do what she did in her youth, because she would have had to pay for it later on.

Another upper class single woman, the daughter of a doctor and herself a Cambridge graduate, had the freedom to invite her English boyfriend to Cyprus for the summer holidays and to be open about all her subsequent



relationships:

I don't care about what other people say. I'M happy like this and the men I'm with don't criticise me. They are my friends for what I am and not for what I've done. I know that a lot of other women are so restricted and suffer from social pressures. I'm lucky to have gone through a university education abroad, to have liberated myself there, and, coming back, I know I can rely on my parents for a few things. (U.Single 4)

I would now like to draw on the findings of Attalides' survey in 1973. Since he was not specifically interested in the question of women, he did not gather much information on women's responses to the issue of the dowry, to social class and to traditional morality. Nonetheless, in terms of the ideal representation of the dowry pattern, it is important that of 100 households questioned about the financing of their home, 37 - that is, just over a third - were given a completed house by the wife's parents as a dowry. The second third of his sample received considerable economic help from the in-laws, and the couple worked together to complete their home. The last third consisted of the most deprived group, who had to build their own house with no economic assistance, except in some cases labour put into the building of the house by members of both families. One of the men he quotes, a 45 year old pharmacist in the employ of the government, said:

My father-in-law bought the building plot and built the house when we were engaged. He also gave us the furniture. I myself contributed a small sum of money towards the marriage expenses. I am now saving in order to build for my daughters. If God wills, we will build for them. (Attalides 1981:161)

In Poli in the 1970s parents like the pharmacist, who followed the traditional dowry pattern, were planning the building of the dowry house on the some lines that it was done in the 1940s. It was aobvious amongst my participants that the tradition persisted stubbornly even after the 1974 war, forcing both polites and refugees of the lower classes to try to save a substantial proportion of their income for the daughter's dowry house, just at the time when their children's development demanded more money for their education. Some of the upper middle class participants mentioned that men (friends or relatives) that they knew very well had married for economic or political considerations; in the case of the daughter of a businessman whose enterprise the prospective son-in-law wanted to manage in the future, "her husband married her for her money". The dowry house in such cases is very luxurious.

### Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that to the extent that the dowry contract operates in Cyprus, whether in its formal or informal form, hidden or explicit, it defines the position of women in that society.

It denies them personal values and constrains them. It reduces them to the position of marketable commodities, subject to, and dehumanised by, commercial concepts such as 'buying and selling', 'competition', 'the market', 'bargaining' and 'negotiations'. Their real feelings and needs are rarely taken into account, and their rights to courtship and sexuality are exercised only if their parents are rich and capable of dowering them well, and enjoy status in the society. Freedom of choice thus exists only for the women of certain classes, and under certain circumstances. After marriage, women are constrained, both in terms of their social behaviour, and of the ways in which they spend money on themselves. Such constraints are the norm in Cyprus, mainly because of the persistence of the dowry system and of the arranged marriage in its new, hidden forms.

In conclusion, I would like to bring together some wider threads from my research.

Firstly, the dowry as a formal system (with legal implications and involving rituals and ceremonies) condenses customary and traditional beliefs through clarify and with both religious discourses and forms and

with the allegedly modern rational procedures of the law and the State.

Secondly, it also shows that the way in which we perceive one of the major divisions in modern societies, that between the private and personal and the public and official domains, tends to obscure the fact that the former is structured and normalised through the latter, and that the private and personal realm, with which women's identities have long been identified, is in fact produced through rituals and procedures that have, in this case, legal standing.

Thirdly, such symbolic systems as that of the dowry are the focus of public attention, and are publically known. Thus, the institution of the dowry determines the proper ways in which a woman must behave, both internally, for her immediate sense of herself and the expectations of her conduct, and externally, for the ways in which her identity is understood by others.

The tradition persists because it represents this complex of social facts, despite criticism by women and by men, by parents, as I have illustrated, and despite the changes related to urbanization and modernization, described above.

The dowry system is to be located within the wider network of social relations and formal institutions which give it some of its particular power to define

what is proper, and also obvious and natural. A fuller explanation of how the dowry system exemplifies the power of a specific kind of patriarchy, supported by custom and tradition, by the Church and by the State would involve more detailed and extensive fieldwork amongst Greek Cypriot women in a wider range of rural and urban settings; and the 'arrangement' between the Cypriot State and the Church, which gives the latter political power in many major areas that have a decisive effect on the lives of women, is itself a subject large enough for a PhD.

Προικοσύμφωνον

Ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος, τῆς Παρθένου Μαρίας τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Βαρνάβα καὶ τῆς Κοκῶνας Μαυριανοῦ

Προικοσύμφωνο τῆς πρώτης μας τῆς μεγάλης θυγατρὸς, ἐμένα τοῦ Κωσταντῆ τῆς Κυριακοῦ, νὰ πάρῃ νόμιμον ἄντραν τῆς, τὸν Γιωρκάτζην τοῦ Παστάλη καὶ τῆς καρδιάς μας ὅλην τὴν εὐχὴν μας.

Δεύτερον. 4 κονίσματα, τὸ πρῶτον σὲ ξύλον, οὐλον ζάρκα καὶ χοντρὸν δκυὸ δάκτυλα, καὶ τὰ τρία ἄλλα σὲ πευκόξυλον ποὺ σὲτάζει πίσσαν, ποὺ τὴν μιὰ μερkiά τὴν ἀπογιαλίδμην.

Τρία ποικάμισα ἐν τὰ δκυὸ μιστά καὶ τόναν μεγάλον ὡς χαμαί, δκυὸ πορεσιανὰ τέλεια ἀτρύπητα κι' ὀλόγερα, δκυὸ μεσοφόρια παστρικά σαπουνισμένα στὸν Πυδκιάν, ἓνα ἡμισυ ζευγάριν κάλτσες (τὴν ἄλλην ἕως νὰ γίῃ ὁ γάμος ἔχει καιρὸν νὰ τὴν πλέξῃ), ἓνα φουστάνιν ἀλατζένον δίμητον καὶ ρικιστόν καὶ ἄλλον ἓνα 'ποὺ ἀλατζιὰν χρωματιστὴν ποὺ τὸ τὴν ἐφουνίσασαι ἐγὼ ὁ Κωσταντῆς τῆς Μαρικοῦς πρόπερσιν ποὺ τὸ παναῖριν τῆς Ἑληιάς, δκυὸ πανιά (τὸ ἓνα ἔχει λίγες τρύπες ἀλλὰ ράβωνται) γιὰ τὸ καλορίζικον, δκυὸ ζευγάριον παπούτσια τὸ ἓνα μισολωσμένον ἐν ἔχει μῆναν, 45 πῆχες δρακοζώνην ποὺ φυτίλλιν. Τρεῖς κούδαρους νῆμα 167½ πῆχες, 25 ριάλια, 22 παράδες καὶ τρία ἄσπρα, δκυὸ μαεῖρισσες καλωσμένες καὶ ἓνα τηγάνη ἀγάνωτον, δκυὸ καντήλες με φιορούδκια, 4 πιάτα, βαθουλά τὸ ἐν λλίον ραῖσμένον, ἓνα μαστραπάν τῆς κόσκηνον καὶ μιὰ τατσίαν.

Ἐὰν μιστὶν μαῖρισσοῦν χωρὶς καππάτζιν, ἓνα χαρτζόξυλον ποὺ ξύλον ζωντανόν, ἓνα λυχνάριν χωματένιον, ἓνα στρώμμα με σδοῦρμπες καὶ τρεῖς μιπακάρηδες γιὰ νὰ ράβουν, ἂν θέλουν τζ' ἄλλον καλλύτερον, ἓνα κομματούιν χωράφιν ἴσα με μιὰ κυλίστρα ἐνὸς γαιάρου, 2 ὄρνιθες με ἓνα πετηνάριν κανάουρον, μιστὴν ὁκάν μακαρόνια τοῦ σιερκού κι' ἂν προφθάσουν καὶ κάμνουμέν τους κι' ἄλλα 2 λίτρες λάιν καὶ 12½ δράμια χαλούμιν, 40 ὀκλωστὲς σκόρτας καὶ δυὸ βάζους κουρλούδι νὰ τὰ μαλάξουν καμπόσο καὶ νὰ τὰ κάμουν ὅλα θάλασσαν καὶ νὰ τρῶν νὰ πίνουν νὰ γλεντοῦν ὅλο τὸ σήμερον καὶ τὸ αὔριον γαμβρὸς νύφη καὶ ὅλα τὰ συμπεθερικά οἱ πῖο των κοντανοὶ γειτόνοι ὅπως καὶ ἡ κοκῶνα ἡ Μαυριανοῦ ἡ δασκάλα μας ποὺ γράφῃ αὐτῶν τῶν προικοσυμφώνων, Ἀμήν

ὁ Πενθερὸς

Κωσταντῆς τῆς Μαρικοῦς

Καὶ ἡ πενθερὰ τους ἡ συγχωρεμένη Μαριτσοῦ

Μαρτυρικὸν

Κοκῶνα Μαυριανοῦ

8)11)1803

DOWRY CONTRACT OF 1803 -Found by Vrasidas Kapernaros and published in the Greek British community paper EMBROS 1979. A rough translation of the contents

In the name of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, the Apostle Barnabas and lady Mariannou: this is a dowry contract by me, Constantis Kyráakou for my first and eldest daughter to take as lawful husband Georgatzin of Pastalis and with all the blessings of our hearts. Second, (I give her) 4 icons: the first wooden, all with knots and 2 fingers thick, the other three in pinewood which have resin on one side. Three shirts, two small and a very long one (....details about the personal clothing that the girl is given is then described in detail 'washed at the river Pidkias' or 'a pair of socks one of which will be knitted by the time of the wedding' etc.) Also 3 balls of wool 167.. length, 25 rialia, 22 parades, 3 aspra, 2 cassaroles lately repaired, an old frying pan, 2 big candle holders hollow inside - one of which is slightly broken - a cup, a sieve and a tatsia.....

THE LIST OF ITEMS OF CLOTHING FOR THE BRIDE AND THE GROOM AND OF KITCHEN UTENSILS CONTINUES....

THE DOWRY CONTRACT FINISHES WITH WISHES TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM AND ALL RELATIVES AS WELL AS TO THE TEACHER, LADY MARIANNOU, WHO WROTE UP THIS CONTRACT.

IT IS SIGNED BY THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE, Constantis of M... by him on behalf of his dead wife, and by the teacher as witness

On the 8.11.1803

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

1. All women spoke about the discussions, agreements and disagreements among their two families, around the issue of dowry. That urge to speak about it was for me an indicator of the importance that this legal form of family arrangement played in their lives.
2. The institution of big landowners, the "tsiflikades", was much more common in Greece than in Cyprus.
3. Cap 149 of the contract law of Cyprus was formulated by the colonial authorities in the 1930s and is still in operation today following the 1959 edition which was printed in London by C.F. Roworth Ltd.
4. Durkheim in his discussions on family and kinship (see Steven Lukes 1973 pp 179-189) and in THE ELEMENTARY FORMS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE: A STUDY IN RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGY, translation of 1912a by J.W. Swain discusses the issue of keeping up appearances in small societies and being very sensitive to the opinions of others.
5. Discussions about the dowry system took place in various academic groups in Cyprus as well as student unions abroad, especially during 1979 when the Charta of the Church was being revised. (See the SYKFA series of discussion groups and seminars in 1979 in London, for example)
6. The cultural rule of 'neolocality' implies that every newly married couple should reside in a separate household, independent of the two sets of parents. It is preferable that the couple starts off with a house, one or both of them own, instead of renting and 'throwing money down the drain'.

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PART III GREEK CYPRIOT WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY CYPRUS

Women have collectively fewer opportunities than men to develop their interests, talents, abilities and understanding of their social and natural environment. There are heavy constraints limiting their freedom to pursue a form of life other than that which is sanctioned by convention. Thus they have fewer opportunities of pursuing a form of life which is happy and fulfilling.

Part three of this research attempts to show by way of empirical work that the above statement is true for Greek Cypriot women. Although it is recognised that regional differences are a constant characteristic of Cypriot social life and that one cannot easily generalize without some simplification/reduction, I start with some generalisations about women's life in rural and urban settings supporting this general statement with the findings of already existing research, including government statistics.

Chapter five gives a national overview of Greek Cypriot women in the 1970's and selects statistics from governmental reports and reports from international organisations about the social structure of Cyprus. The main and first objective here is to give a comprehensive demographic picture on the national level. Some data about the growth, development and movement of the island's population will be given at the beginning; these

are census data on population trends, births, deaths, marriages, divorces and emigration. Most of this data, unless otherwise indicated comes from the Demographic Reports of 1976, 1978 and 1980.

Chapter six describes the research sample in detail and presents the history of the research. The initial interest in WMPns was followed by fieldwork in Horio where ninety four women were interviewed to be folloed by fieldwork in Poli where ninety eight women were interviewed. The particular sampling approaches for each one of the three subsamples are explained and tables of codifying and analysing data are given here.

Chapter seven analyses the data gathered at the rural setting studied , Horio, and discusses role expectations in the Cypriot rural family. Rural women and agricultural production is one of the issues that in the case of Horio prove the argument of rural women's continuous participation in productive work outside and inside the home.

Chapter eight deals with the life expectancies of ninety eight urban women from Poli and compares their situation with that of rural women. The traditional - modern continuum is discussed as an example of the continuing strengh of oppressive ideologies even in situations where structural changes are obvious.

Chapter nine uses the data gathered during the fieldwork

in the rural and urban settings and discusses the special situation that women without men from Horio and Poli find themselves in. These special categories of women urban or rural are faced with patriarchal ideology and their choices in life are very limited.

CHAPTER 5 - GREEK CYPRIOT WOMEN IN THE 1950s -  
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Introduction

5.1 Demography Trends

5.2 Family life: births, deaths, marriages and divorces

5.3 Education

5.4 Employment

5.5 Political context and women

Conclusion

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Map of Cyprus showing the positions of the invading forces at various dates during the two months of fighting. (From the book: The Cyprus problem, Nicosia September 1980.



CYPRIDT  
CHAPTER 5: GREEK/WOMEN IN THE 1970s -  
THE SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Introduction

In previous chapters in Part I, I have reviewed general historical, religious, legal and political factors which have created, maintained and legitimated patriarchal ideology and practice. In this chapter, I shall be more specific and examine through the use of public statistics, the implications for the positioning of women of demographic trends affecting the size of the population, its gender ratio, its geographical distribution and incidence of births, deaths, marriages and divorces. This will be followed by a discussion of education and employment based upon government statistics. The chapter will continue with a detailed description of the political context of women and an account will be offered of various organisations and associations concerned to promote the political activity and achievement of women. Finally empirical data drawn from a major study of the political involvement of women will be presented to supplement and support inference, which have been drawn from public statistics. This chapter will provide, it is hoped, a context in which the fieldwork to follow may be placed.

The chapter deals essentially with statistical tables covering general information on the whole, at the beginning, of the Cypriot population as a background to the two localities in which the field work took place, and later discussion is focused upon the positioning of women as revealed by governmental statistics.

The statistical information given here is mainly based on Governmental publications, e.g. the Demographic Reports, and Reports of various specialist governmental departments as well as Reports from International Organisations which have carried out research in Cyprus: for example, the work of Dr House, whose project on Sex Discrimination in the Cypriot Labour Market is original and very valuable, on a subject which previously has been completely neglected by the Cypriot Government. Government gathered information lags behind the British system in organisation and in general analysis and use of data. Although I considered its deficiency, it seemed necessary to inquire into official statistics because these were the only available source on Cyprus. I was aware at the time of the limitations they represented especially with respect to the representation of women. It is even more true in Cyprus that official

statistics do not set 'the factual context' in which discussion for improving women's position in the various fields of social participation could be based. In the Western World there has been an increasing concern with charting social, economic, and demographic trends as a means of informing policy since the mid-sixties. The statistical portrayals of women and their underlying assumptions have been, until now, divorced from reality and are therefore very misleading. Women are misrepresented in these statistics. A factor which has serious implications, especially for policy-making. As the EOC/SSCR Panel found in pursuing the programme of research on 'Women and Under Achievement' (1), official statistics provided them with an unreliable basis for analysis. Muriel Nissel (1980) discussing the basic concepts and assumptions involved in women in government statistics considers three main reasons why we need statistics about women; firstly, she points to the physical difference (women as bearers of children); secondly, the culture-based differences, i.e. the way women lead their lives as compared to men; and, thirdly, inequality, resulting from exploitation, (loss of power, influence and living standards) that is associated with women's lives. Government policies have as great an impact on women's lives as they have

on the lives of men, and they should be informed by unbiased, full yet critical statistics on status, opportunity and other areas of women's lives which are as yet not available. In some cases because those statistics have not been collected and in others because they have not been processed or published. As Audrey Hunt (1980) has stated:

Causes of gaps and unreliability in statistics relating to women at work: - the necessary data are not collected at all or the data are collected in such form as not to provide the relevant information about women or to exclude certain groups which are collected but are processed or presented in such a way that the desired information is not revealed or is obscured; data are collected infrequently or irregularly. This is particularly serious at times of rapid change - different methods are changed over time so that findings are not strictly comparable - all the necessary data may be available but no general publication is made (possibly for political reasons).

(Audrey Hunt 1980:31).

Nissel (1980) argues that housewives, considered non-productive, have been completely excluded from all governmental statistics:

Being a housewife is quite clearly not being in a job, whilst being on strike is. This group and its conventional analysis, census and other surveys, contains a bundle of assumptions, some of which are functions and others are activities, which are dangerously misleading and unrelated to reality. The purpose of the section should be to identify different types of economic activity, and the basic distinction is between paid and unpaid activities. Those who are in a paid job or seeking paid work, or temporarily away from it

because of sickness, holiday or strike are all involved in paid economic activities. Those, such as parents looking after children and people keeping house, are, ..... economically active in unpaid jobs.

(E.O.C. Bulletin No.4 1980:12)

All the above-mentioned shortcomings of governmental statistics were borne in mind when I did my reading of governmental and other publications relevant to the subject matter of this chapter. Here I shall present information on 'Demography', on 'Family Life' covering births, deaths, marriages and divorces, on Education and Employment. The last section of this chapter discusses the issue of Greek Cypriot women and politics based upon information given in a survey carried out by a group of Cypriot social scientists between 1978-82 when the results were published.

### 5.1 Demographic Trends: Population, Gender and Women

The population growth is described by Table 5.1 where the average annual numerical increase and rate of growth (%) during the intercensal years since 1881 are given. The gender breakdown that appears in this table will, I hope, be adequate to illuminate the position of Greek Cypriot women who are the focus of this research.

TABLE 5.1

Population by Sex at Census Years

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Source: Demographic Report 1980:45\* 10e jure' population

During the last 23 years the population has been growing at a rate in excess of 1% per annum, compared with an average annual rate of 0.2% during 1970-77. By the end of 1980, the last year covered by my fieldwork in Cyprus, the population had reached 633,500; this shows an increase of 1.4% over the previous year. The government explains this increase as the result of, firstly, a sharp decline in emigration, and secondly, an increase in the number of births.

In Cyprus, where colonisation existed until 1960, there was massive emigration especially to the UK during the 1950's and '60's. Periods of unrest, the most recent being caused by the 1974 Turkish invasion of the island, resulted in the departure both of foreign citizens residing in the island at that time and also of a great number of indigenous people, both Turkish and Greek, who emigrated to the UK, Australia, USA, Greece and elsewhere.

The development of urban centres is a relatively new phenomenon in Cyprus. The most rapid urban growth was experienced during the last three decades; in 1946 only 25% of the total Cypriot population resided in urban areas, but by 1960 it had increased to 36% (the rapid movement from villages to towns had begun) and in 1973 the proportion had risen to 42%.

Since then the tragic events of 1974 have created a further 200,000 displaced persons (mainly rural) who have sought refuge mainly in the towns. The new refugee settlements resulted in an increase in the urban population to 53%, outnumbering the rural population for the first time. That is why in this research (the fieldwork of which was completed in 1980, still a confusing period in many ways) I speak about a rural/urban continuum in the life of the women studied, since most of them migrated with their families to the towns or were forced by the 1974 invasion to move from the north to the south and from a rural to an urban setting or vice versa. This considerable shift of the population has greatly influenced women's lives.

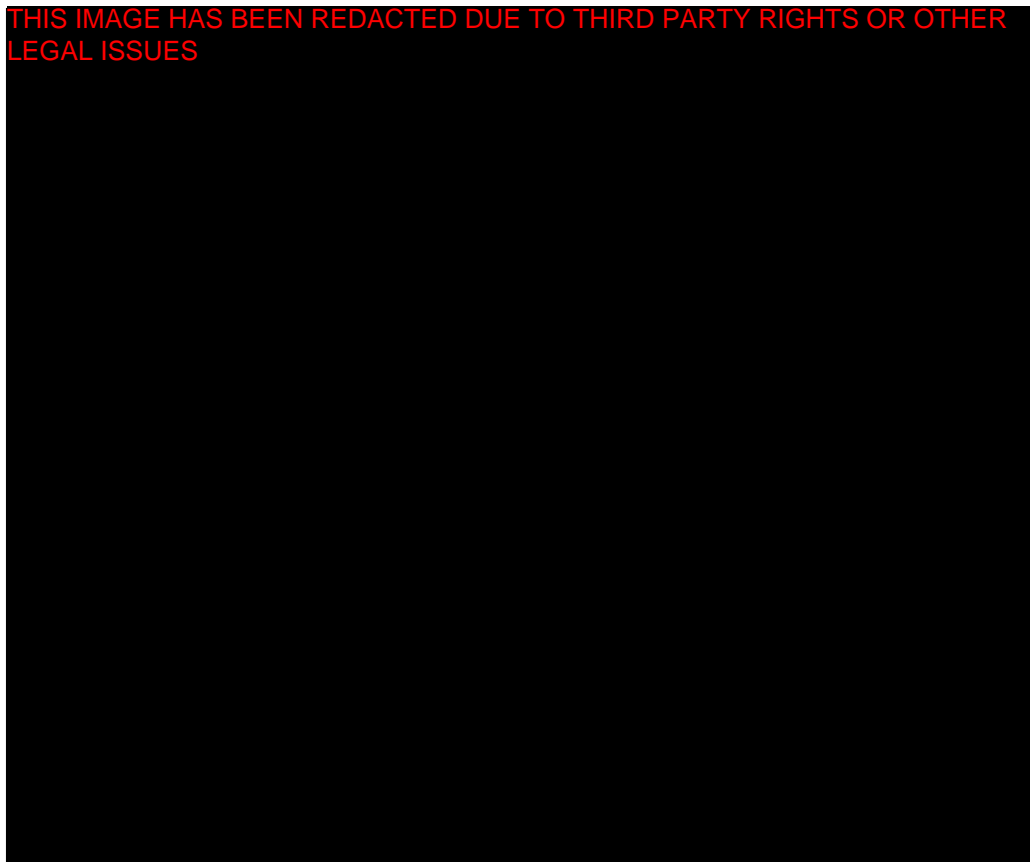
In Cyprus females outnumbered males between 1931 and 1976 but gradually a balance was achieved and during the last two years of my fieldwork the sex composition was marginally in favour of males - as it was from 1881 to 1921. Generally speaking males predominate in the young age-groups, while a female majority is observed in older age groups; females have a longer life expectancy while male births always outnumber those of females. The 'de jure' population in 1976 was 612,851 of whom 306,144 were males and 306,707



females. Between the ages of 20 and 40 (i.e. the marriageable age) there were 96,334 males and 93,046 females and by the end of 1980, of the estimated 634,000 Cypriot population 318,000 were males and 316,000 females. As a summary I would like to cite the following table which covers population growth up to the last year of my fieldwork.

TABLE 5.2

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Source: Demographic Report of 1980:41

The age composition of the population underwent significant changes between the years 1931-1976. As Table 5.3, below shows, the intermediate ages of "15-29" and "30-49" always comprised the bulk of the population. Over the last 40 years the number of older people has been continuously increasing. A comparison between the percentage of old people over 50 in 1931 and 1976 shows an increase of 6.5%. It is important to note that the median age of the population increased from 23.3 years in 1931 to 27.4 years in 1976 because of better nutrition and health conditions.

TABLE 5.3

Distribution of Population by Main Age Group

<u>Age-group</u>	1931		1946		1960		1976	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
0-14	116,246	33.4	152,650	33.9	208,514	36.4	155,815	25.4
15-29	96,181	27.6	116,036	25.8	134,417	23.4	177,781	29.0
30-49	78,547	22.6	106,291	23.8	127,112	22.2	139,134	22.7
50 & over	56,985	16.4	74,137	16.5	103,523	18.0	140,121	22.9
TOTAL	347,959	100.0	450,114	100.0	573,566	100.0	612,851	100.0

Source: Demographic Report 1980:46

Emigration and immigration was a constant phenomenon in Cyprus between the 1950's and 1970's and was to be renewed as a mass population movement after the 1974 invasion. In 1976 5,647 emigrants were reported while by 1980, because of better job opportunities in Cyprus, there were only 525. Half of these in both cases belonged to the young ages 20-39. In terms of distribution by sex, prior to 1963 there were more males than female emigrants since fathers considered it dishonourable to send daughters away for work while between 1963 and 1980 there were more females who by that time outnumbered males and who realised that if they were poor they had no marriage prospects in front of them. The UK was the main country of destination in the 1950's and 1960's while in the 1970's and '80's Australia was much more preferred. Greece became for the first time a preferred country for emigration after 1974.

## 5.2 Family life: births, deaths, marriages and divorces

### Births and Deaths

Under-registration of both births and deaths was a reality in Cyprus until recently and that is the

reason for basing figures, even in governmental documents, on estimates which were obtained usually by matching data from two independent sources: in the case of births, data provided by mid-wives, hospitals and doctors, and registered births; in the case of deaths priests provided data which were matched with registered deaths. A careful study of births and deaths took place in 1976, when for eight months information was collected and analysed. Estimates of births and deaths have been revised retrospectively on the basis of these findings.

Birth rates as Table 5.4 below shows, are based on the mid year 'de jure' population estimates.

TABLE 5.4

Live births by Sex, Crude Birth Rates and Proportion of Males at Birth

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Source: Demographic Report of 1980:59

(Note that the male rate was always higher than that of female.

According to the same source deaths were also estimated and rates are based on the mid-year 'de jure' population estimates.

TABLE 5.5

Deaths by Sex and Death Rates between 1961-1980

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Source: Demographic Report 1980:81

In both deaths and births males outnumbered females. Women between 15-44 years of age, i.e. the child-bearing component of the population, have been studied independently in order to gain a more refined measurement of reproduction, that is the general fertility rate, which represents the number of births per 1,000 of women in this age group: in 1976 for example, the crude birth rate was 18.7 per 1000 of population while the general fertility rate per 1000 of females aged 15-44 was 80.7, this group of women being 23.1% of the total population. (Ibid:60)

During the colonial era the crude birth rate in 1901 and 1946 was 30.7 and 32.2 respectively. A sharp decline is shown after 1946; in 1960 it became 25.3 and in 1977 only 18.4. This decline could be attributed to the changing attitudes towards religion, the rapid urbanisation process and the availability and spreading of knowledge about contraception. But in 1980 an increase of up to 21.7 was noticed for which the probable explanation was the post-war recovery of the economy.

It is worthwhile adding here that infant mortality rate figures refer to infants under one year of age. In 1978, for example, out of a total of 5,166 deaths only 203 were infants (stillbirths excluded).

### Marriages

Ecclesiastical and civil marriages both operate in Cyprus for different groups of Cypriot citizens. The majority are members of the Greek Orthodox Church and have to marry according to the rules of the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church in order to have their marriage with another orthodox person legally accepted. Civil marriages take place between Cypriot citizens where one or both of the them are not Greek Orthodox. The statistical tables given below and in Appendix 5 take into account both Ecclesiastical and civil marriages.

The vast majority of marriages in Cyprus are between couples who are both marrying for the first time. (96.6% brides and 93.5% grooms in 1978).

The most popular months for marriage ceremonies are July to October with 60.5% of the total marriages taking place during these months. In 1978 the least popular month was April, owing to Lent.

I shall now discuss the age at marriage in the 1960's and 1970's referring specifically to gender, and rural-urban differences. The average age at marriage



during 1964 (irrespective of type, order or place of) was estimated at 26.8 years for the groom and 23.5 for the bride. By 1980 as table 7.6 below shows it became 27.4 for the groom and 23.8 for the bride. As far as the marriage rate is concerned, the age group '20-24' in 1978 had a marriage rate (per 1000) of 108.1 for women as compared to 74.4 for men; age group '25-29': 47.6 for women; and 86.4 for men; age group '30-34': 15.4 for women and 34.8 for men. In comparing the average age at marriage in urban and rural areas, it was found that as regards first marriages the average age of brides and grooms is lower in rural than in urban areas.

The age difference of the couple has also been statistically recorded and the average difference in the age of grooms and brides is about 3 years. This has been observed in both ecclesiastical and civil marriages and it is interesting to note here that the difference in age between the bride and groom becomes wider as the age of the groom increases. That is, older grooms seem to search for very young wives instead of those a few years younger than themselves.

TABLE 5.6

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Information collected and compiled from  
3 Demographic Reports: 1977, 1978, 1980.

TABLE 5.7

Civil marriages in 1980 with at least  
one spouse not Orthodox Cypriot

	<u>Groom</u>	<u>Bride</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Cypriot	78	66	144
Greek	15	9	24
British	41	52	93
Israeli	96	97	93
American	35	34	69
Lebanese	62	53	115
Other	109	125	234
	—	—	—
<u>TOTALS</u>	436	436	872

Divorces

Divorces in Cyprus are not as common as in the West because of the social and religious values surrounding the institution of the family, but they are allowed on special grounds. An increase in the number of divorces granted has been recorded lately; in 1978 the number of divorces granted was 158, an increase of

16.2% over 1977. Article 75 of the charter of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus gives the grounds for which a marriage may be dissolved (2). These include grounds for which either spouse may file a petition for divorce as well as conditions where petitioners may only be the wife or the husband. Male petitioners resort to 'refusal to return to the conjugal house despite invitation sent by the Bishop', while wives use the ground 'desertion for a period exceeding three years'. Both grounds can be simply considered as abandonment and cover 74.7% of all divorces.

It is important here to note that the grounds for a divorce should be distinguished from the true causes of family disruption. People resort to grounds that are easy to prove and least unpleasant to make public. I should mention here that no full scale study of divorce in Cyprus was undertaken until 1980, and I have not been informed of any such study since then.

As far as children are concerned there is no statistically significant difference in the grounds for divorce for couples with children as compared to those with no children. Out of 158 couples who obtained divorces in 1978, 82 (51.9% of the total)

reported no children; this can generally be taken as meaning that divorce was granted during the first few years of marriage. The distribution of divorces by duration of marriage has shown a slight drop in 1977 and 1978 when the median duration of marriage was 6.9 and 6.8 years respectively. The average duration of marriage for the five years 1974-78 was estimated by the overall median at 7.6 years. In 1978, 36.7% of the total number of divorces occurred during the first four years of marriage. The median duration of marriage estimated separately for wife and husband plaintiffs for the last 5 years for which data are available are:

TABLE 5.8

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Information collected from Demographic Reports  
of 1977, 1978.

### 5.3 Education

Having dealt with aspects of demography and of family life, I will now turn to education.

This institution of society is important to Cypriot women because it is through education that women have gained access to knowledge in general, knowledge of their own oppression, and improved their position in the labour market and thus gained what economic independence they have achieved. Since education is such an essential prerequisite for women's successful resistance against sexual oppression it has been given a strong emphasis in feminist theory and practice. Here it is useful, therefore, to provide some basic information on education in Cyprus, its general structure and practice and, in particular, on women's participation in it.

According to Article 20, paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the Republic, every citizen has the right to education. The problem in Cyprus, like so many other societies, is whether women are in fact offered equal or even significant opportunities in education. By 'fact' here I mean actual governmental policies and the ways and means by which they are put

into practice. The whole issue of educational opportunities and female participation cannot be studied in isolation from the other socio-economic conditions affecting and affected by education. Relevant information about cultural, social and economic conditions will be provided in sections 4 and 5 of this chapter.

Education and academic learning in general have long been highly regarded in Greek Cypriot society both for their cultural value in enhancing the person, so that she/he does not stay, 'an unworked block of wood' xilou appeletsiton - as old Cypriots say and for future career prospects. The high value placed on education is borne out by the data on University and college education abroad presented in Table 5.9 below. This provides powerful evidence of the trend among Cypriots to achieve academically, even if it costs the family so much to send a child abroad to a University.

In Cyprus, education is available from the age of 2 1/2 to 21 through various educational institutions both public and private. As I have said the state is constitutionally committed to the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens, but education is only compulsory between the ages of 5 1/2 and 12.





State education is provided free for both sexes and since the academic year 1979-80 all nursery, primary and secondary schools have been mixed. The Cypriot educational system is highly centralised with all teachers appointed by a government Education Committee operating centrally. The system is divided into four main levels: pre-primary or nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary. More specifically the Ministry of Education assumes responsibility in terms of approval, supervision and/or funding for public and private kindergardens, public primary Greek schools and Armenian and other private primary schools. In the secondary sector all public general, technical and vocational schools, and in the tertiary sector all higher pedagogical institutions, e.g. the teacher training college, come under the Ministry of Education; also all special schools e.g. for the mentally handicapped, blind, deaf and rehabilitation centres. There are only a few exceptions where public schools do not come under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education and these exceptions relate to a few specialised vocational institutions which come under the relevant Ministries (e.g. A.T.I. the Higher Technical Institute which comes under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance). As well as providing full free education the state also offers a small subsidy to private schools, which are largely self-financing.

Between 1960-1974, the first fourteen years of independence, education in Cyprus underwent a spectacular development to the extent that by the end of that period the country ranked among those countries with the highest literacy rate. By 1979-80 it was estimated that only 11% of the population over 15 was illiterate, and that percentage was mainly confined to citizens over 40.

TABLE 5.9

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Source: Statistics for Education - An analysis by the  
Ministry of Education, for the National Committee (1980:16)

In both urban and rural areas far more women than men are illiterate. Statistics gathered at the censuses in the colonial era show the following:

TABLE 5.10

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Information gathered from various governmental publications

In the school year before the 1974 war 38% of the school population in both the primary and secondary sectors was attending schools in the towns and suburbs, while the other 62% attended in villages. All school buildings belonged to or were approved by the Cypriot Government and all operated mainly during morning hours. After the war, because many buildings were destroyed or seized by the invading forces, the school population had to attend classes either in the morning or the afternoon in building shared by two or even three different groups. For example in 1974-80 of the 57 public secondary general schools 11 functioned in the afternoons because only 46 buildings were available. In all, 110,396 students were catered for in 769 buildings by 5,630 teachers giving a mean teacher - pupil ratio of 1:19.6. (For more details

about pre-primary, primary and secondary education both public and private see appendix 5.3. Special reference is made there to percentages and participation of girls and boys as well as their varied achievements at various levels of education. Also information is gathered about refugee pupils, boys and girls of all ages scattered now in the south. (Appendix 5 has some information about tertiary education; other educational programmes are mentioned and stress is laid on the issue of the presence of females in some courses and their absence in others).

In the education of girls explicit discrimination has not yet disappeared but persists according to circumstances. That is, the economics of the family influence the girls' educational opportunities far more than the boys'. Parents are prepared to deprive themselves of material things and, functioning with the concept of 'deferred gratification' (Balswick 1973:38), send their sons to the Gymnasium or to a University abroad even if they do not excel as students. They are not on the whole prepared to undergo the same deprivations for their daughters.

Another issue to be discussed is the guided difference in orientation of boys and girls with respect to the routes they follow in the gymnasia. That is, boys are psychologically and practically prepared for science and technical courses leading straight to Universities while girls study classical or secretarial subjects, the only exceptions being very bright girls who struggle through to persuade parents and teachers that they are capable of a science course. The root of this inequality lies in the socio-economic structure and the prejudices about sexual divisions as these appear in the way girls are brought up and educated. 'A woman's place and function is in the family, at home'. Professional qualifications are not sought for because the wife's wage is always seen as complementary to that of the husband and most women accept and pursue studies that can help towards their future marriage. One of the most noticeable discriminatory practices is the fact that most male postgraduate students are already married and do not face any problem in leaving their wife and children for studies abroad, but if a female dares do such a thing even if she manages to persuade her husband, 'society' criticises her strongly, for neglecting her main duties for something which is not essential for her. In spite, of the growing number of girls

pursuing all kinds of university courses the fact that there is very little sharing of housework and childcare makes it very difficult for professional women to achieve a high position in their career.

The way in which traditional sets of beliefs and practices tend to reproduce women's subordination and existing power relations in the classroom (as in the home and at work) is illustrated in the interviews in the following chapters.

#### The teaching staff

It is recognized that an important factor in developing pupils' gender identity is the 'teacher'. The quality of the teaching staff as well as the balanced representation of genders are decisive for promoting the principle of equal opportunities. Is this educational principle practised in Cyprus? At the primary level effort has been made to have equal representation of the sexes in the teaching staff by leaving the decision on the numbers of male and female students to enter the teacher-training college to the Council of Ministers. But in public Greek-Cypriot primary education in 1979-80, of 131 principals A' - the highest promotional position - 113 were males and

only 18 were females; also of 156 principals B' only 22 were females. On the other hand of a total of 91 teachers on probation 31 were males and 60 were females. Further in the category of kindergarden teachers there are 40 women and no men on the staff. At secondary level the following facts are very revealing: out of 2,957 academic and technical staff in all secondary education 1,266 are women spread in the usually female subjects e.g. Philology 383, Languages 186, Arts 45 etc while their presence in subjects like Maths (89 females - 213 males) Physics (60 females - 167 males), Agriculture (0 females - 5 males), commerce (32 females - 108 males), is limited. The total numbers of technical staff is 351. Of these 304 are men and only 47 are women.

One could argue that statistical data presented by the Government (some of which have been given above and in the appendices), show women on the road to progress and as taking advantage of the 'equal' opportunities for education offered by the state. Female participation in the primary level is complete. In secondary education most girls succeed, while at the third level there are more women than men in teacher training, secretarial courses and nursing. The key questions though of relevance to this thesis, concern, which subjects women study (and why these), and the number of years Greek-Cypriot women pursue their education.

Number of pupils by type of education, class and sex  
in public Greek technical and vocational schools

1979-1980

Type of Education		C l a s s						All Classes
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
General	- Total	612	719	671	-	-	-	2,002
	Male	522	595	527	-	-	-	1,644
	Female	90	124	144	-	-	-	358
Classical	- Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commercial	- Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Science	- Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Technical	- Total	-	-	-	279	289	378	946
	Male	-	-	-	260	268	337	865
	Female	-	-	-	19	21	41	81
Vocational	- Total	-	-	-	1,193	971	723	2,892
	Male	-	-	-	1,061	886	706	2,673
	Female	-	-	-	117	85	17	219
ALL TYPES	- Total	612	719	671	1,477	1,260	1,101	5,840
	Male	522	595	527	1,341	1,154	1,043	5,182
	Female	90	124	144	136	106	58	658



### 5.3 Employment data

This section aims to outline the available facts and figures on the involvement of women in production in contemporary Cyprus. By examining the forms of women's employment and the sectors of production in which women have been incorporated, I hope to strengthen my argument about the ever-present and pervasive patriarchal beliefs and practices. The questions to be examined are: To what extent does economic participation free women from subordination to patriarchy? Is participation grounded in production and does it infact reinforce, existing sexual divisions and power relations? If so, to what extent?

The professed concern of the government is that Cypriot women should be integrated into development. This does not acknowledge the fact that women have been always present in production, especially in agriculture. Working in the fields, feeding or tending to animals, collecting grapes, olives, carrots, fresh vegetables or transferring the raw materials into consumable goods for the family's needs or for the market, e.g. wool into clothes, the milk into cheese and other consumables: halloumi, anari and trachana, all these productive activities are carried out by

women but are not counted; because the work is unpaid these are not present in governmental statistics (see relevant discussion in introduction of chapter 5 above).

Until the 1960s labour force participation was considered a strictly male domain, and local customs and traditional ideas and practices delineated and defined the role of women in Cyprus as domestic and thus unproductive. As Table 5.11 below shows the recorded number of women participating in full-time employment in 1946 was twelve times less than that of men.

TABLE 5.11

Male and female labour force participation in 1946

	Men over 14		Women over 14	
	No.	%	No.	%
Full-time	133,682	86.80	11,337	7.21
Part-time	<u>20,318</u>	<u>14.20</u>	<u>20,403</u>	<u>12.98</u>
TOTAL	<u>154,010</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>31,470</u>	<u>20.19</u>

i.e over 79%  
of women are  
classified as  
outside the labour  
force.

I said 'recorded number' because many of the categories of work which contribute economically to the maintenance of the family and to agricultural production are not counted in the official statistics. One could argue that all women who work in childcare and/or housework should be included and counted as part of the economically productive population. (4) In Cyprus, even the category of women who work as unpaid labourers on the farm or assistants in the small family business or whose craft work brings extra income into the house, cannot be found among the statistics. In 1976 80% of workers in these sectors of the economy were women. The main criteria for counting somebody among the economically active population is the amount of hours per day that the person puts into paid work continuously. Since most rural women deal with housework, childcare and then fill in their hours with farming activities, they usually do not work for more than five hours continuously which is the minimum to allow them to be counted a position among the economically active population. One cannot rely solely on statistics if the true picture of female labour force participation is to be understood. As Vavra (1972) argues:

Many factors determine the extent of female participation in economic activities and attitudes and customs with respect to appropriate roles for women in economic and

social life vary tremendously in different societies. There are differences in the ages at which women marry and in their responsibilities for the care of young children which have a bearing on their availability for employment outside the home.

(Vavra, Z, 1972:315)

The increasing participation of Greek Cypriot women in paid work (agriculture not being included completely) after the 1974 invasion is made clear by the following table.

TABLE 5.12

Female population in paid work

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of female workers</u> <u>in paid work</u>
1976	36,000
1977	38,600
1978	41,300
1979	44,100
1980	47,300

Between 1976 and 1980 an increase of 30% has taken place, but as Table 6.13 (later) shows there are important age and regional differences.

The 1974 war has brought about very important structural changes in the Cypriot economy. An effort has recently been made to plan future labour market roles and wage structure and to direct education in order to avoid large-scale unemployment of educated individuals or a filtering down of educated workers into jobs that were formerly performed by the less educated. Women have recently been seen as significant components in this 'manpower' planning. W.J. House, an ILO expert on manpower services, studied in 1980 female participation in the Cypriot economy and argues that Cypriot women are heavily discriminated against. He says:

Discrimination against women in the labour market can lead to a serious misallocation of labour. When women's earnings and job opportunities are inferior to men's despite their identity in all other human capital qualities, women may be deterred from entering the labour market or investing in expensive education and training programmes.

(W.J. House 1980:2)

Women are generally seen as reluctant to enter labour-force participation especially in the 40-44 age group in urban areas and the 20-24 age group in rural areas. As table 6.13 below shows, rural middle-aged women comprise the highest percentage of female-labour

force participation as at that age their daughters need money for their dowry-house or their sons need money for their University education abroad.

TABLE 5.13

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Source: W.J. House 1980

Key questions are raised by these statistics:

W.J. House (1980) and others (5) have investigated the negative differential, labour segmentation and other structural features which reduce women's earnings. He says:

The earnings of women invariably lie significantly below male earnings, for all education levels and at all ages. Female earning profiles peak much earlier than their male

counterparts and are notably flat. On-the-job accumulation of human capital appears severely limited for women, partly because of breaks in their wage experience due to marriage and family responsibilities and partly because of the kinds of occupations in which they are concentrated, where the scope for learning is minimal. Job discrimination against women would mean that certain occupations are reserved for them where they have little opportunity to raise their human capital and earning power. (6)

The occupational category in which women find themselves plays the decisive role in the low wages they are given. The role of education and job experience in earnings determination, and the extent of labour market segmentation as well as wage differentials have been carefully studied by W J House and his team. He also tried to explore the role of the public sector in segmenting the labour market and to document the extent to which women suffer from wage discrimination. He takes into account the other forms of discrimination such as employers hiring women for certain kinds of jobs only, parents discouraging girls from undertaking higher education, women's low educational aspirations.

He based his analysis on two sets of complete data: a) the 1975 Survey of Wages and Salaries and Hours of Work (Department of Statistics and Research) and b) the Survey of 1979 which was a year of full employment.

The findings of this comparison were very important. Wage differences as revealed between females and males are very large.

The differential in average earnings sometimes exceeds 10% ... The occupations dominated by women allow little room for productivity growth; the work experience of women is discontinuous with rapid depreciation of accumulated human capital during absences from the labour market and, of course, pure discriminatory behaviour. (6)

It has been officially calculated that in 1980 32.5% of the labour force were women, mainly over 15. In 1976, the overall female participation rate in Cyprus for women aged 15 and over was 29% higher than other Mediterranean countries like Italy and Greece.

The first area of production in which traditionally women have been involved is agriculture. The latest figures about employment in Cyprus and the main sectors of the occupational structure show a decline in agricultural labour from 34.8% of the work force in 1972 to 22.6% by 1977 (8).

The second area of production in which women are represented in large numbers is "manufacturing" where 17,231 women out of a total of 44,165 female labour



force worked in 1979. The largest group of women is found in the following categories:

- a) production workers
- b) performing mechanical tasks as tailors and,
- c) shoe cutters and hand packers.

The third largest sector of female participation is that of the Community Social and Personal Services where 11,489 women work.

The fourth area is the Wholesale, Restaurants and Hotels sector, where 9,605 women worked in 1979 (9).

Table 5.14 below shows an increase in the clerical workers in 1960 and 1970.

TABLE 5.14

Female participation by occupation

Occupations	1960 Females Absolute Number	Females %	1970 Females Absolute Number	Females %
Professional technical and R.W.	3.144	10.88%	4106	12.012
Administrative executive and managerial workers	82	0.28%	1928	5.64%
Clerical Workers	227351	9.52%	5594	16.37%
Sales Workers	1.651	5.71%	2488	7.28%
Workers in transport and Communications occupations	213	0.79%		1%
Craftsmen and Production pro cess workers	14.856	51.42%	13408	39.24%
Service Sport Recreation workers	6.083	21.05%	6240	18.26%
Miners quarrymen A.R.W.	107	0.37%	56	0.16%
TOTAL	28.887		34164	-

The basic findings of this brief account of Greek Cypriot women and work after 1974 could be summarised as follows:

It is a fact that female labour force participation is increasing steadily especially in waged work but this increase is limited to certain economic activities and to certain less well paid professions. There exists a range of occupations where women's participation seems to be defined basically by the social values and prejudices and stereotypes about men's and women's jobs. Again, these conclusions will be illustrated in the following chapters where I present the findings of my fieldwork.

### 5.5 Political context and women

The Cypriot Constitution gives women the right to vote and to be eligible for election to any public office on equal terms with men. Furthermore, Cyprus has ratified a number of international agreements which also guarantee equality in the enjoyment of political rights.

The general comment of all researchers or commentators who even briefly refer to the issue of 'Cypriot women and politics' (and this is true for many other countries as well) is that although women were 'granted' equal political rights as compared to men they do not in real life share an equal position with men. Cypriot women are effectively absent from public life, from the pursuit of common causes and matters of great importance for the life of the island. Women are absent from senior governmental positions, the administrative and the legal system. This thesis demonstrates throughout how much the patriarchal ideology prevailing in the public Cypriot life facilitates and promotes this situation and how much of this tradition has been internalised by women themselves in formalising their conceptions of definite male and female roles as active administrators and decision makers on the one hand, and passive followers on the other. Since, as I shall argue, there have been some changes, we have to examine the prejudices and practical problems faced by those women who have dared overcome the barriers.

This section starts with a brief review of recent initiatives in the country and continues with facts, figures and discussions of women's presence in trade

unions, political parties, women's organisations and finally ends with a discussion on governmental response to external, mainly U N, pressures, to evaluate the position of Cypriot women in public life. In Chapter 11 I draw attention to developments after 1980. Political parties will only be located rather than studied in detail.

On April the 14th 1980 a day conference with the title "The Cypriot Women, in the Fifth Year of the UN Decade for Women" was organised in Nicosia by the Association 'Equal Rights, Equal Duties.' It examined the role of the Cypriot woman in society and discussed the difficulties which stand as barriers in the campaign for equality of the sexes. (10) Among the speakers were the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Education and Mrs S Soulioti, former Minister of Justice, and only Greek Cypriot woman who up to 1980 held an important governmental position. She said:

There are difficulties which emanate from ourselves and from ages of tradition which have become for us second nature. For example, the working mother is torn between her loyalty to the children and her career and develops a sense of guilt. This dilemma is a fact which makes women reluctant to take part in politics since the mother in politics, believes she steals time from children and family. (my emphasis).

(S. Soulioti 1980)

Then the Director General of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, Mr M Sparsis, mentioned the results of the special study prepared by this ministry aiming to pinpoint the sectors where women are at a disadvantage as regards their participation in Cypriot social and political life. Such pro-women activities and conferences have become 'something of a fashion' in the aftermath of 1974 war in Cyprus. The seminar ended leaving everybody 'happy': 'it was successful'. 'Everybody present had the chance to speak ....' but nobody asked: What next? What action and how quickly is that action needed? How seriously was the issue of women's secondary status in paid work, education and politics taken?

Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic guarantees all citizens equal rights and responsibilities including their right to vote and to be elected. (It seems very natural today that we enjoy this right but it is one for which women had to fight hard not long ago in many countries.) In Cyprus today one finds women syndicalists, members of various trade unions, e.g. women's sections in the Primary and in the Secondary Teachers' Unions, women scientists, women affiliated to the Orthodox Church (e.g. the OXEN groups), women's sections in all political parties and

governmental employees' associations. All these profess to 'fight and safeguard women's rights'. In reality only a few individuals and very few associations have really fought and are still fighting persistently to change attitudes towards women.

I consider it important to give space to women themselves to speak, even here among the statistics and tables: The following is an example of a woman who is a prominent figure in the public sphere, a woman who 'made it' i.e. achieved a high position in the trade union P.E.O. (see abbreviations) and soon became the leading figure in the women's section. She said at the International Conference held in Nicosia in December 1975 for the UN Women's Year:

The main objective of our Conference is not to examine and report on the progress made in the struggle of the Cypriot woman for equality because the situation in Cyprus is not normal. We are facing much more serious problems. The aim of this conference is to find ways of solving the problems created by the coup and the invasion of '74.(11)

The same woman and from the same position said the following in 1976:

The Women's Section of PEO believes that the solution to the economic and social problems will only come after the solution of the Cypriot problem. Only in conditions of peace, in an independent Cyprus, . . . ., can women fight and gain their rights. We women must play an important role in the struggle for a just solution of our political problem. (12)

And in 1977 the same person, expressing again not her own but her organisation's main views, stressed the fact that the 1974 coup d'etat and invasion prevented women's organisations from dealing with the pursuit of equality and involvement in politics. The unsolved Cyprus problem imposes a secondary status on all women's issues and according to her view (the view of the Communist Party, Women's section, that she represents in most of her public speeches), she argues that the women's issues ought always to have a secondary status to the political problem.

Greek Cypriot women's organisations or sections in Trade Unions will follow: P.E.O. is the left trade union. It has a women's section mainly oriented towards the trade union issues of work conditions and wages. P.E.O. is affiliated to the Communist Party of Cyprus 'AKEL' and from its earliest days it was tied to the main struggles of the working class. It was oriented towards the trade union issues of improving wages and work conditions. It thus bypassed or left behind as not important all issues of sexual roles and the family. The women's section of PEO was founded in 1956 with 2,755 on the membership list; by 1976 it had grown very fast and had 15,000 women on its list. When celebrating its 20th anniversary the

organising secretary stressed the fact that women's involvement in the political life of the island follows their participation in production. And although it is true for Cyprus as well that the first step should be for the woman to get out and participate in public life and production, the second step should soon follow; women need to fight for better conditions at work, nursery facilities and subsequently for equality at home. In a way, PEO has omitted from its plan of action a 'timetable' for achieving equality at home, for a fight against patriarchal ideology which can be found dominant in a 'progressive', communist home. In several ways though women have been counted upon for union or political issues.

As Anthias (1982) says:

Women's issues were mentioned at the 1926 KKK (Communist Party of Cyprus) Congress in Limassol. Women were employed in the First Tobacco Factory in Nicosia in 1884 and also worked in the mines of Amiantos (1906), Skouriotissa (1912) and Kalavassos (1928). The first weaving factory was established in Famagusta in 1906 where the women earned half the wages of men .... Women's strikes appeared as early as 1938 when 52 women workers at Metochi went on strike .... and 60 women went on strike for three months at the Weaving Factory in Famagusta, men often acting as blacklegs. At Komviou Factory in 1941, 515 women workers went on strike because men were being paid twice as much for the same work.

(Anthias 1982:31)



The first organised group of women in the left was PODG formed in 1951 to be followed by POGO (the Pancypriot Federation of Women's Organisation). Because PODG, and its successor POGO, is the first political grouping of Cypriot women I would like to expand on it and give details concerning its constitution to show that the goals have been set since 1951, at least in paper but have not been achieved yet and pressure is not exercised by this organisation. It declares in its constitution that the aims of the federation are:

- 1) To improve the position of Cypriot woman with respect to equality in all spheres of social life (my emphasis).
- 2) Woman's participation in the struggles of the Cypriot people for Independence, Democracy and Social Welfare.
- 3) Woman's fuller participation in the economic life of the island.
- 4) The effective participation of Cypriot women in the struggles of neighbouring countries for Independence, Peace, Democracy and Social Progress.

5) Also and in more detail POGO guarantees the existence of:

- (a) Womens' rights to elect and be elected to all social positions.
- (b) Womens' rights for work and the abolition of discriminatory practice against them; also the provision of nursery facilities for the working mother.
- (c) Achievement of legal and real, in practical terms, equality ('de jure' and 'de facto') both in marriage and the family.
- (d) Protection for the child.
- (e) Achievement of a good level of health for women and children through a national health scheme.
- (f) Achievement of a better educational and cultural level for the Cypriot women as a whole.

During a Pancyriot Seminar in Nicosia (12.6.1977) on the issue of 'Women's role in the political and economic life of the island, a POGO initiative, one hundred and five women representatives of local groups listened to speeches and discussed issues of women's participation in the economy of the country, concentrating mainly on the problems arising from:

(a) discrimination in women's pay.

(b) nursery facilities for the working mother and protection for motherhood.

Women's participation in the political life of the island was also discussed and focussed mainly on an analysis of the obstacles to the involvement of women in great numbers in politics. Three years later during my fieldwork, the same issues were raised again as important and very urgent. The government did not have the time or money to solve these issues, which would help all working women and especially the ones in most need, the refugees and working class women, most of them members of POGO.

EKA - is another organisation well known in Cyprus. It is the traditional left wing rural organisation affiliated to AKEL which aimed towards politicizing by unionising farmers, shepherds and other agricultural workers.

PEK - is the right wing rural organisation which emphasised working 'in villages', working with 'our peasants' and for 'our people'.

None of these two organisations keep records of women members and when asked about female membership they explained that only men are on their registers. One explanation for this could be that these organisations are very old and their basis was the traditional patriarchal rural family. Members were only men, the representatives of the family. These organisations consider the whole family group as their members without asking for membership fees from each family member. That is why during their various functions or even evening classes, e.g. cookery, they also address the rural woman of that particular family of which the husband or father is a member. Women never entered their lists nor of course their committees. The representatives of these organisations were quite happy with the situation.

The left wing trade union - PEO - has a women's section mainly oriented towards the trade union issues of work conditions and wages PEO is affiliated to the communist party AKEL and from its earliest days was tied to the main struggles of the working class, and

thus bypassed or left behind all issues of sexual divisions as not important, not urgent. The women's section of PEO was formed in 1956 and by 1976 it had 15,000 women in its membership list. When celebrating its 20th anniversary the organising secretary stressed the fact that women's involvement in the political life of the island follows her participation in production.

SEK is the right-wing Pancyprriot organisation of workers which has a smaller membership than PEO and enjoys less popularity. There is very little known about the activities of its women's section. I managed to gather the following information from their central office:

TABLE 5.15

Members on SEK by sex and region

<u>Town</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Nicosia	12,339	4,561
Limassol	9,968	5,583
Famagusta	2,753	1,441
Larnaca	2,697	575
Pafos	<u>2,600</u>	<u>1,508</u>
TOTAL	<u>30,357</u>	<u>13,668</u>

POED (The Pancyriot organisation of Greek teachers)

This organisation has a long history and has provided a forum for discussion of trade union and educational issues.

Women are represented in it almost from the very beginning because female teachers entered full-time teaching work early. The fact that these women usually came from a poorer class (intelligent but poor women who had to work) helped towards this understanding of and reacting to discrimination, since they were involved in their trade unions in larger numbers and for a longer period. It is worth mentioning here that two women teachers were representatives on the Executive committee during the British Colonialist period and they were made redundant with their male colleagues because of their trade union activities in the thirties.

In 1980, though, there was only one woman out of seven members at the Central Executive Committee of POED a disproportionate amount if we take into account the fact that in 1979-80 out of 2,111 teachers in the primary education, excluding teachers at kindergardens and schools for handicapped children where the majority were women, 1,235 were women.

OELMEK (the secondary school teachers organisation) has on its membership list 1,224 men and 958 women. Women represent here 44% of the total but until 1979/80 they were not represented on the Executive at all and when in the end they put themselves forward as candidates only one was elected. Women secondary teachers were not active in trade union struggles and took their job more as a hobby than as a career. The reasons for this are first the fact that women teachers in secondary schools and other professional women are a phenomenon of the last decades, and their lack of experience on the one hand and of confidence prevented them from becoming involved in trade unions. Secondly most women from the above mentioned group came from a university-educated, middle class background: their families could afford to send them abroad and the aim of their education was to achieve higher social status and a better marriage and not to become career women. Thirdly most of these professional women also have the total responsibility for childcare and housekeeping: if not housework, and there is little time left to be involved in union activities, which are considered secondary to family life.

If their husbands belong to the administerial or business sector, these women have to act as hospitable hostesses decorating the house and themselves, for various social events.

The last point leads us to a consideration of the power of traditional values and prejudices and the sexual division of labour stemming from them in a male dominated society, like Cyprus, where all important decisions are taken by men safeguarding always their own interests; women are kept safely away from important positions.

In PASYDY (the civil servants organisation) women are 35.3% of the total; in the membership list there are 7,706 males and 4,198 females; there is only one woman representative on the executive committee of 45 members. This is the highest body of the organisation. PASYDY has 75 sections and the officials of each section are the president and the secretary. Of a total of 150 officials 13 are women, that is 8.6% of the total. There is also the women's section of PASYDY to which all women members of the organisation belong. It is not concerned with union issues but mainly with issues related to the problems of the working woman civil servant - e.g. motherhood benefits, ante-natal care, etc.



I shall now give the following table concerning women's involvement in Trade PASYDY Union activities between 1952 and 1978.

TABLE 5.16

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Source: Eliades, M. 1982:17

One can conclude that in 1980 no woman was the president of any trade union or professional organisation - except the women's sections; only one woman held the position of manager and that in a private business, but no woman was head of a department in a governmental office, no woman was on the council of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, no woman mayoress, no MP and there was no woman on the council of ministers.

### Voluntary Women's Groups

The Association of Cypriot women scientists (A Cy W S) was formed in 1979 and within about a year had a membership of 600. The aims of the Association are to promote the scientific and professional interests of its members and to create links and contacts with women's associations and women scientists and individuals from abroad. In more detail: the main objectives of the A.Cy.W.S. are to mobilise effort towards \*abolishing sex discrimination, and to encourage and help Cypriot women scientists to realise their potential in the professional, scientific, social and political sphere; to encourage a feeling of duty towards other Cypriot women whom the women scientists must bring together for organisation, cooperation and for promotion of common goals; to encourage friendship and understanding with women scientists all over the world, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion or political beliefs.

The "Pancyriot Movement for Equal Rights - Equal Duties," was formed in November 29th 1978, and immediately became a member of the 'International Alliance of Women'. Its aims are to fight for and promote substantial changes towards equality between men and women in terms of rights and duties legal

status and opportunities for developing potential; to encourage the citizens of the Cypriot republic to undertake their responsibilities as members of this society and to take part in public life; to ensure respect towards every person's personality without discrimination by sex, race or religion; to ensure and secure the moral, intellectual, social, scientific and professional rights of the Cypriots; to protect human rights, cooperate with other Cypriot and foreign organisations and maintain contacts with other international organisations with similar aims; to contribute to discussions on the issue of a creation of a climate of understanding between nations and to organise such activities which will promote the aims of the Association.

In the plan of Action priority is given to political rights considered by this organisation of prime importance in changing attitudes and abolishing discrimination. Both men and women must become aware of their political rights and their responsibilities to be equally involved in the public life of the Country. The second target is 'Education and Professional training', and the third is 'Work'.

Lastly, this movement aims to lobby for a governmental committee which ought first to study discrimination (discriminatory practices) and try to abolish them: "Our aim is to gain not only a phenomenal equality but a real one and such a committee should aim to achieve this".

Another organisation to mention here is "Syntonistiki" the federation of all women's organisations and groups. This Federation was formed after the events of 1974 and aimed to bring all Greek Cypriot women together in the general effort for reconstruction. As a result, in April 1975 thousands of women from all over the world united in Cyprus and organised a "Women's Walk Home" a march of women only in support of the United Nations Resolutions demanding the return of refugees to their homes. It took place outside the occupied area of Cyprus in the district of Famagusta and the aim was to 'join hands' with the Turkish Cypriot mothers and other women, to overcome the three armies Greek, UN, Turkish and return to their homes in the north. Refugee and non-refugee women of all ages took place in this 'walk home' and it was the first time in the history of the island that many women came together as a group of Greek Cypriot women for a specific goal.

The walk, which culminated in the extension of a hand of friendship across barbed wires, demonstrated that the women of Cyprus have borne their hardship with dignity, courage and fortitude and that from their suffering has sprung, not hatred, not bitterness, but a greater understanding and a conscious determination to work actively for peace. (13)

An English woman who took part in the walk reported back in Britain:

On Sunday April 20th, I took part in a demonstration in Cyprus, when 30,000 women from 70 countries took non-violent action in a conflict situation. It was an act of solidarity with all the women of Cyprus - Greek, Turkish, American, Maronite, and British. While Greece and Turkey were threatening, Cleridis and Denktash talking, and Britain apparently forgetting her obligations, the Greek Cypriot women approached the Turkish Cypriot women. They took a letter asking their former neighbours for the sake of the children to pull down together the barbed wire of the Attila Line, which symbolised the wall of hatred erected between the two communities by foreign interference(14)

In December 1975 an International Conference 'Women - Cyprus 1975' was held in Nicosia for two days. Views were exchanged and discussions took place in furtherance of the aims of the International Women's Year, for the solution of the problems of women as women, but also for the achievement of the most vital objective of all 'world peace'. The experience of Cyprus has been a living and painful illustration of the fact that no human right can exist unless peace can first be assured. These events were the most

political events that Cypriot women participated in masses. But in fact even this mass and dynamic participation for a few days during the conference and during the 'Walk Home, demonstrations do not imply political awareness on the part of Cypriot women.

Further a small group of professional young women who studied abroad, mainly London, with Trotskyist views brought together students and working women and started a publication on issues of sex discrimination: unequal pay for equal work, social conditioning, preparation of marriage, dowry, housework and the right for protection of motherhood. In their first pamphlet "Women, Inequality at work, Oppression at home" (Nic 1978) they stress the need for struggle on feminist issues, 'because today's reality in Cyprus is very oppressive both at work and at home'. The effort of this group was to bring as many people together as possible to fight for more nurseries and protection of mothers, for equal pay, against treating women as objects, against family and society using women according to traditional norms. It is the duty and responsibility of all women to secure this change, possibly with the cooperation of men. This group criticizes the fact that all feminist issues since 1974 have been buried under the excuse that priority must be given to the solution of the

political problem. This factor has exacerbated all social problems, especially women's position at work. The argument of this group is that women should not wait for the solution of the difficult Cypriot political problem in order to demand solutions to their pressing everyday problems.

#### Political outcomes: Achievements and Failures

Have these organisations been effective? What was the reality for Greek Cypriot women in 1980? Have women's organizations succeeded in their efforts to make the masses politically aware and to achieve equality and a radical change in attitudes? If not why not? These successive questions can be answered by the fact that by 1980 no woman had been elected to the House of Representatives nor had women even been put forward as candidates in the 1976 Parliamentary elections. As mentioned above, very few women held senior positions in the political parties and those few only in the women's sections. There was only one exception to the gloomy picture described above; that is, President Makarios appointed Mrs Soulioti as Minister of Justice. Her social background (15) and the special education that she received from her early childhood have made it possible for her to be among politicians. Generally women are still absent in

governmental administration. In the diplomatic service the same situation exists.

I would like to argue that the main reason for such little progress is the reluctance of the main and biggest women's organisations e.g. POGO and the women's sections of the political parties, to take on board and give priority to important women's issues like the sexual double standard and the relevant practices of this ideology as manifested in the family and marriage in the forms of the dowry system and arranged marriage, together with issues of work, female chastity and passivity.

The trade unions concentration only on discriminatory practices in the area of work leaves the root of the evil untouched. It has been impossible until lately for most women's organisations in Cyprus to make the link between sexual liberation and equality in the workforce. They concentrated on economic participation but change has been very slow and the poor results should guide women's organisations towards finding the solution in a combined dynamic attack against male dominated ideology and its practical forms of discrimination regulated by Church and State in the Public and Private life of Cypriot women.



Anthias (1982a:29) argues that Socialism and Nationalism developed in Cyprus in a 'contradictory articulation' and all issues of social reform have become subservient to the main struggle for the Independence and Sovereignty of the Cypriot nation.

Legal and Church regulation, as well as the political experiences of Cyprus between 1950-1980 (which are the most important three decades for the women's movement) have been important obstacles.

#### Governmental response

##### Formation of a National Committee in the light of the UN Women's Decade 1975-1985

The Cypriot Council of Ministers decided (decision No. 18.409 following proposal No 860/89) to form a committee with the Minister of Justice as Chairman, and representatives from the Ministries of Justice, the External affairs, the Department of Employment and Social Security, Education and Agriculture as members all appointed by their own Ministries and also representatives from the office of the General Attorney of the Republic and the Department of Statistics and Research appointed by the General Attorney and the Minister of Finance respectively.

The brief of this committee in the light of the United Nations Women's Decade was:

- a) statistical research so that the degree of woman's participation in all areas and levels of Cypriot life could be made known.
- b) Research into the Legal Status of Women, especially in those areas in which they are discriminated in comparison to men.
- c) Research into the social status of women.
- d) According to the results of these investigations proposals were to be made (including suggestions on policy changes and changes in law) in order to alleviate possible discrimination against women so that their position will be improved according to the programme of 'Women's Decade' adopted by the United Nations.
- e) The adoption of a specific policy and programme for achieving success of the above mentioned aims in a certain time limit.

- f) Responsibility for enforcing decisions and results.

The above Committee could ask for cooperation and advice from non-governmental organisations and associations.

This Committee was formed in 1979. Meetings and consultations followed for 3 years and finally at the end of 1982 the report was published for internal circulation.

The outcomes of this report are discussed in more detail in chapter eleven.

So far we have described the role of formal and informal agencies in the provision of opportunities for women for the improvement of their position in the general social and political context. Further, I was fortunate in that I could draw upon a major empirical study which included a special inquiry into many aspects of interest to the issues I have described and discussed in this chapter. I will comment on it here in some detail.

Research carried out by a psychosociological group in 1978 (the results of which were published in 1982) took the Cypriot woman as its subject of study. It followed the traditional method of sampling by random techniques. The interviews were held by fifty three women who volunteered to undergo a rapid training by the team and then conduct the 1,000 interviews door by door in the 4 districts remaining in the free part of Cyprus. The questionnaires covered the following areas: Marriage; the role of the married woman in the family; Equality; Politics; Relationships with men; Sex; Religion and Entertainment.

I would like to refer to findings of this research from the 4th section of the book entitled Politics in order to support my comments on the participation of Greek Cypriot women in politics with the results from this empirical study.

On the subject of Cypriot women and Politics, three areas were looked into in detail. a) Cypriot women's interest in Politics; b) Cypriot women's independence in thinking and acting in the political arena, and c) Cypriot women's views on the capability of women in the sphere of politics.

The first question, 'Do you support a certain political party?' aimed to bring into the open women's interest and involvement in politics at the level of reading about, taking part in discussions and voting for particular political ideology.

One third (35%) of the interviewed women answered 'yes'. The researcher who analysed this data failed to see this proportion as a problem to be explained by historical reasons (the short period of free political life 1960-1978, a period full of disturbance and the persistence of traditional sex roles.) In fact she suggested that this result (35% interested in politics) may be a characteristic of the whole of the Cypriot population and not only of women.

The correlations of education, age, marital status, geographical location, place of residence and work with this question show important variations. e.g. Education and political interest: of the women without education only 20% were interested in politics while of the women with higher education 50.4% answered 'yes'. Age and political interest were important only for women over 50 who showed very little interest (25% as compared to 36% of the mean~~age~~). Membership of a political party is the first

practical step in a person's politicization. It is important to note that to the question 'Are you interested in the political life of the community', 52% of the whole sample answered 'very much' and only 28% answered 'not at all'. Attention should be drawn here to the fact that this question was put to women only 4 years after the invasion.

The mass media i.e. newspapers, radio and television, in Cyprus are the main sources of information on politics and 39% answered that they read a paper every day while 17% answered never (mainly the uneducated women). As table 5.17 shows education is a very important factor.

TABLE 5.17

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Another important observation stemming from the data is the fact that more housewives (54%) than working women (37%) do not take any part in political discussions. A significant point to be mentioned here is also the degree of women's participation as voters during elections. The parliamentary elections of 1976 preceded this research and the question 'Did you vote at the last elections' was put to all the women interviewed; 80% of them answered yes.

The degree of political independence of the Greek Cypriot woman

The questions in this section aimed to find out how much the patriarchal familialist ideology through the father/husband imposes a particular political 'choice' on women and leads them to vote for a particular party. It is taken for granted in most rural homes, for example, that all members of a family agree in their political views, exceptions are few and considered very unfortunate. To the question, "If you voted during the last elections did you make your own choice or did you vote according to your husband or father's suggestion?", 32% answered that they followed what had been suggested to them. Most of these women came from rural areas and are usually 'uneducated'.

The question that followed was: 'Do you agree with your father/husband in politics?' The majority, 77% answered 'yes', a proportion which shows the subtle, indirect, influence that the man's political views have on his woman or women. This was especially the case for married women. Here 94% answered that they agreed with their husbands' views. The data shows the importance of education in correlation with the degree of agreement of husband's political views. 88% of women with very little or no education agreed completely with husband's views. 62% of secondary school educated women also agreed while only 50% of higher educated women agree.

Cypriot women's views on the capability of women in the sphere of politics:

'Are women capable of being involved in politics?'

The 1,000 interviewed women answered as follows:

TABLE 5.18

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Source: The Cypriot woman (1982:111)



And to the question, 'If women were to administer politics and nations, would the world be better?' 42% of the total answered negatively.

E. Kalava who analysed the data on Cypriot women and politics comments that although in 1978 the presence of women in positions of leadership was minimal, women's attitudes towards politics are changing. Political awareness, interest and involvement in party politics is developing, that gender is not considered an important factor in a person's capabilities for leadership and that education is a decisive factor in the development of such ideas. I would like to question her concluding remarks basing my questioning on the very data that she analyses; that is 80% of the interviewed women answered negatively to the question concerning their views about women's capability in politics. Another 42% answered negatively to the second question quoted above. And further I would like to argue basing this argument on my research that with the exception of women - university graduates, Cypriot women are still in the transitional stage of consciousness raising and political awareness.

## Conclusion

I have listed here after demographic, educational and employment statistical data the important women's organisations, groups, women's sections within the political parties, conferences and committees set up especially to study Cypriot woman.

All these groups were activated especially after the 1974 war, but six years of 'active' discussions and women's mobilisation have brought very little material change. The women interviewed in my research in 1979-1980 show by their comments how many times their hopes were raised and how many disappointments they suffered; this was a strong complaint especially from those who made a conscious effort towards a professional career. My main finding is that Cypriot women are experiencing the transitional stage between tradition and modernity in all aspects of their lives, political involvement including. While previously, ignorance about politics was more or less considered a virtue, the experience of the 1974 war has inevitably affected and awoken Cypriot women but it has not yet made them full participants in the decision-making processes of the politics of their country in its most critical moment.

My argument is that today there is an illusion at least of choice and although constitutionally it is established that Cypriot women should enjoy equal political rights the reality in numbers until 1980 showed that 'words' were not met by 'acts'. And why? Because the granting of equal political rights, although a pre-requisite, is unfortunately not a guarantee of political power. First of all it cannot change deeply entrenched attitudes about women's abilities. It was not followed by any significant participation of women in leadership in political parties or organisations. Prejudices about the position of women in Cypriot society have deep roots both in males and females. Customs, norms, traditional values have been internalised and have kept women away from public life for so long that attempts to change meet tremendous barriers at every step. The material in the following four chapters show exactly how theory and practice in terms of sexual equality differ.

Chapter 6 which follows describes the sample and touches upon some of the specific problems I faced during the field work due to the subject of study and the circumstances in which the fieldwork was conducted.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

1. EOC /SSCR Panel (1980 Bulletin).
2. The grounds for divorce according to article 75 of the new charter of the Church are listed in appendix nine.
3. Information on illiteracy between 1901 and 1943 was gathered from the following governmental publications: Report of the Ministry of Education - 1980; Demographic reports; Draft of special report on Cypriot women and Education, Nicosia 1979.
4. Childcare and housework are not considered as full time work to be paid in the same way that these services are paid if offered by professionals in hotels, restaurants, hospitals childcare services etc.
5. House W.J. and others 1982, have researched into this issue and reported to the ILO and the Cypriot Government what necessary steps should be taken and how urgent these were.
6. The differential earnings of women in most sectors of the economy in Cyprus have been discussed in detail by O. Stylianou 1983.
7. See House W.J. in Segregation and discrimination of women workers in Cyprus, Nicosia 1982:12
8. The latest figures comparing the numbers of male workers involved in agricultural labour in 1972 and 1977 show a shift towards paid employment, mainly in the building industry. Their seasonal agricultural work, especially that of small farmers, is done by female agricultural workers/ family members on a part time basis, and of course unpaid.
9. For more details see appendix 5.
10. The association 'Equal Rights Equal Duties' has male and female membership and claims to serve the interests of women by involving men in the discussions about women's rights. It is backed by the middle classes and has government support, in the form of at least some funding for the organisation of conferences like the one mentioned in the text. It is for the future researchers to evaluate the value of such organizations in promoting women's rights.
11. M. Vanezou, the representative of PEO, presenting her Union's views at a conference about women, is another example of the way in which the political problem is overshadowing the discussion of any change in the position of women.

12. Her talk in 1976 again urges women to put aside any demands for change until the political problem is solved. At the moment of writing this note (January 1985), eleven years have passed since the invasion and the problem has not yet been solved. If Cypriot women are to follow her advice they may not be able even to dream of change, let alone fight for it.

13. The preparations before THE WOMEN WALK HOME demonstrations and the involvement of women in the organisation of local groups raised the consciousness of rural and urban women and for the first time some of the Greek Cypriot women realised their potential for fighting for change if they are united. Participants U.42 (a 37 year old mother of two boys), R.2 (a 34 year old woman mother of two boys and a girl), and R.45 (a 49 year old grandmother of 6 children), mentioned this demonstration as an important event in their lives after the invasion.

14. In her article, the British representative from a Quaker group described the events as a unique experience not only for the Greek Cypriot women involved but for all participants: women from other countries and the male Greek Cypriot population who observed women's activities with great interest .

15. The special social background that this woman came from (upper middle class and from a family which valued women's education), gave her the chance not only to finish secondary education in Cyprus but also to study abroad. Besides her own qualifications, her father's and brothers' social position put her in a unique situation vi a vis other Cypriot women and some Cypriot men in the period just after the Independence struggle and the formation of the Republic of Cyprus. Thus she was selected by the first President of Cyprus to serve as a Minister of Justice. She is, up to the moment of writing this note (January 1985) the only woman to serve as a Minister in the Republic of Cyprus.

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CHAPTER 6: THE RESEARCH SAMPLE, METHODOLOGY  
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## CHAPTER 6: THE RESEARCH SAMPLE, METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL FINDINGS

### 6.1 Introductory remarks

In my general introduction I have only sketched my research sample. Here I will talk about it in more detail.

The "sample" really consists of three separate samples which represent the history of the research. I was initially interested in a crucial category of women who were rendered husbandless by the war not because their husbands had died but because they were reported missing. These women were now economically, domestically and emotionally highly vulnerable. I believed that the ambiguous status of these women (neither married nor widowed) would reveal the general position of subordination of women in Cyprus in its most acute form. The relation of these women to their families of origin had a new ambiguity and dependency. The fact that they had children made it necessary for them to obtain work usually on unfavourable terms. They were placed in a new situation for which they were unprepared: although to all extents and purposes single women, they were

unable to act as such, since they were unable to obtain a divorce for many years. The WMPns were thus subject to a complex of pressures, tensions and contradictions which I believed would illuminate the general position of women in Cyprus; for their position condensed in itself the patriarchal positioning of women in Cyprus in its most extreme form.

My experience of the interviews with these women provided me with a base upon which I could build towards an understanding of the general position of women. I decided to extend the sample so that I could work with a relatively large number of married and unmarried women living in more 'normal', more usual contexts and examine their similarities and differences. This larger sample I decided would have to consist of sub-samples drawn from urban and rural areas. I would then be in a position to examine whether there were any special consequences of the situation of the WMPns which influenced these women's perceptions of their position in Cypriot society.

To facilitate the understanding of the processes I went through, I offer here a summary of the steps I have taken and how, historically speaking, the thesis developed. I am aware that the following is somewhat

subjective but I see it as inevitable in the kind of research to which I was committed. Late in 1978 I decided to explore for my doctoral research the position of Greek Cypriot women inside and outside the family with special reference to the after effects of the 1974 war on their lives. This came as the outcome of my development along personal, intellectual and professional lines. Early in 1979 I started the reading of the relevant literature from various related disciplines eg. Sociology, Anthropology, History and Psychology. I was searching for a conceptual framework, for a theory to explore the ideas I was formulating. I was dissatisfied with any one discipline alone as a framework and decided to develop an interdisciplinary work. I went into the field during the summer of 1979 starting with the specific case study of the WMPNs. I conducted thirty unstructured interviews with such women, and contacted officials from the State, the Church and the Committee for Relatives of Missing Persons. The next step was to discuss the results of this Study A; I attempted a first analysis of the data gathered from Sample A and wrote it up, in a paper presented to the BSA (Students' Conference during Christmas 1979). There I presented my observations, first analysis and discussion of the interviews. I had by then covered the literature on similar 'problem cases' in the USA

(Missing Persons of the Vietnam War), Middle East (Israeli women whose husbands went missing) and Europe (War widows and wives of MPns after major conflict situations eg. the first and second World Wars). Then I returned to continue my fieldwork with Samples B and C. Firstly I studied Rural women and then Urban women. This was an attempt to gain a holist picture of the female population by studying two representative groups.

## 6.2 Total sample

I shall give the numbers and the attributes of the total sample. I distinguished six attributes of the women according to their marital status. I considered that it was important to distinguish between women who were not yet married, those who had failed to achieve marriage, those married, those separated or divorced, widows and the WMPns. I expected that the particular status of the women would affect others' perceptions of them and their own perceptions of their position. It was equally important to obtain sub-samples drawn from urban and rural regions for the reasons given earlier in the thesis.

Within the categories rural/urban I made a further distinction which refers to women whose origins are rural but who, after marriage or because of the war, moved to an urban region. I also singled out urban women who because of the war moved to a rural region. These delicate distinctions were made in order to examine the effects of the rural or urban cultural and social contexts upon the women's perception of their position. They are indicated in the table as follows:

- 1) R -- U refers to those women who moved from rural to urban regions.
- 2) U -- R refers to those women who moved from urban to rural regions.

---

Table 6.1

The three samples and geographical mobility of the  
women due to marriage or the war

---

	TOTAL	R -- U	U -- R	Kept their original residence
Sample A	30	17	7-	6
Sample B	94	-	9	85
Sample C	98	36	-	62

---

The following table gives the marital status and regional residence of the total sample.

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Table 6.2

Total Sample    marital status and regional residence

	Not yet married	Failed to achieve marriage	Married	Separated or Divorced	Widowed	Wives of MPns	TOTALS
R	6.7%(15)	1.3%(3)	30.1%(67)	-	4.%(9)	2.7%(6)	45%(100)
U	5.4%(12)	3.6%(8)	28.8%(64)	6.3%(14)	-	10.8%(24)	55%(122)
TOTALS	12.11(27)	4.9%(11)	58.9%(131)	6.3%(14)	4.%(9)	13.5%(30)	100(222)

I have so far given the characteristics of the sample in terms of marital status and geographical residence. For the purpose of this research it is clearly important to make a distinction between women who because of the war were forced to become refugees and so leave their local communities to find temporary residence in the "free" part of Cyprus and those who are not refugees. In the table which follows I have distinguished sub-sample A, which consists of the wives of Missing Persons, sub-sample B which consists of rural women and sub-sample C which consists of urban women. Women who moved, as mentioned above, are here placed according to their residence at the time of interview. Further in Table 6.3 I have given for information the total numbers of the Greek Cypriot population who were refugees or non-refugees at the time of the field work as given by official sources.

(1)

Table 6.3

Total sample as affected by the 1974 war

	Refugee	Non Refugee
Sample A (WMPs)	16	14
Sample B (R)	15	79
Sample C (U)	<u>20</u>	<u>78</u>
TOTALS	51	171

---

Whole Greek Cypriot  
population

about 200,000

about 400,000

I ensured that the distribution of Refugee/Non refugee in sample A corresponded to the percentages for the total number of WMPns.

In table 6.4 I give the age distribution for the sample. There are some complications here because the age-range of the women in the three sub-samples are different: (1) For the WMPns there were no women under the age of 21. (2) in the case of urban and rural women I have included a category of women who were unmarried and so the age range here commences at 15.

Table 6.4  
Age distribution

For sample A	(21-30)	(31-40)	(41+ )	TOTALS
For sample B	(15-30)	(31-45)	(46-75)	
+ C				
Sample A	53 % (16)	23 % (7)	23 % (7)	30
Sample B	34 % (32)	36 % (34)	29% (28)	94
Sample c	32 % (32)	48 % (48)	18% (18)	98
TOTALS	36 % (80)	40 % (89)	23 % (53)	222

### 6.3 The Sub-samples:

I shall now give detailed information about how each sub-sample was established, including details of education and occupation and the interview procedures. A more elaborate description of the urban and rural one will be given in the chapters 7 and 8 which contain the major discussion of the fieldwork. I start first with sub-sample A.

(i) Sub-sample A which consisted of 27 WPMns and 3 fiancées of MPns could be described as a 'snowball' sample. That is my first contact with a WMPn, a relative whose life and hardships I had followed since 1974 (WMPn 7) led me gradually into a group of other WMPns. These were my initial contacts at the time when I was building up confidence with these women with long afternoon talks, drinking coffee or preparing dinner. I had already decided that I was going to concentrate on only 30 case studies so as to be able to study them in depth. I decided that about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of this sample should be between the ages of 25 - 45. These women are very vulnerable because they require protection as they are either the 'fallen' (2) or the 'not yet fallen' - the women who are considered at risk.

The initial contact was made by a friendly letter, early in 1979, to WMPn 7 explaining in a simple way my intentions to research among WMPns during July and August of 1979. By that time, I was also aware of the existence, the network and the various activities of the committee of Relatives of MPns. As soon as I arrived in Cyprus I visited the offices of this official committee and read all the literature they produced for wide circulation, the newsletter and numbers and addresses of WMPns. Although I had this information I still persisted in creating my sample as a 'snowball' because of the importance I attached to creating a special relationship of trust and intimacy with every participant before the actual interview. One woman led me to another and although I did not make use of all the acquaintances I made during this process the information helped me to build up a sample with the restrictions I had imposed before the fieldwork.

Before I started the interviews I needed to contact the relatives of the wives of MPns I was going to interview in order to secure both the respect and the trust of their family, which was a necessary pre-condition of the women's acceptance of the researcher, a non-relative who was going into their home to ask delicate questions. I then interviewed 27

WMPns and three women who were engaged and about to marry at the time of the war, but whose fiances were lost. The actual interviews were unstructured and taped and in most cases took place in the informant's home or place of work.

Special consideration was given to the fact that the interviewee should feel comfortable. I strongly felt that a formal questionnaire would be inappropriate and limiting in collecting intimate information. I made sure that enough scope was left for open ended discussion after collecting certain basic social and familial facts. The main points of the interviews are indicated below.

Main points of the interviews with wives of MPns

1. Background data: Name, date and place of birth, education, job of:
  - a) respondent (woman participating)
  - b) her husband
  - c) her children
  - d) her parents
  - e) her inlaws

2. Details about the respondent's engagement, dowry, wedding.
3. Married life: comments about her husband (detailed if possible) as a husband, father, partner/friend.
4. Details about her first experiences during and soon after the 1974 war.  
(a) the first year. To whom did she turn:  
family  
church  
magic/mediums  
other relatives
5. Contacts with the Committee for Missing Persons
6. Contacts with the Department of Social Services.  
What kind of help did she get until now?
7. Contacts with other governmental departments.
8. Psychosomatic health - Doctor's reaction to her problems.

9. Children - Psychosomatic health  
Schooling  
Economic needs
10. Work. Economic problems.
11. Relationship with in-laws.
12. Relationship with her own extended family.  
Pressures from parents.
13. Handling of movable and immovable property.
14. Relations and contacts with the Church.  
(Considering a second marriage - Divorce)
15. Status in the society. Relationships with  
unrelated men. Gossip.

Because of my own knowledge of both Cyprus and the situation of being a single parent a trusting atmosphere was created in most cases and by the end of the interview session/s I had to act more as a social worker comforting and giving advice than as an interviewer. The person interviewed in the context of her familiar environment where she felt free to speak without fear that other people were hearing her views



and might criticise or gossip. As mentioned above, the sample consisted of women of various ages between 21 and 65 at the time that the interviews were conducted, and this gave me the opportunity to elicit a range of opinions, especially on very controversial issues like remarriage.

#### Details of sub-sample A

I shall first give details of age distribution and education. I used the following educational scale for the whole sample:

1. Illiterate.
2. Half-Primary Education (They were withdrawn by their parents after they had acquired literacy, so that they could look after the younger brothers and sisters while their mothers went out for agricultural work).
3. Full-Primary
4. Full-Secondary
5. Further Education
6. University (1st degree abroad)
7. Postgraduate studies abroad

Table 6.5

WMPn, age and education

	21 - 30	31 - 40	41.- 60	TOTALS
1.	-	-	2	6.6% 2
2.	-	3	2	16.6% 5
3.	4	3	2	30.0% 9
4.	8	-	1	30.0% 9
5.	1	-	-	3.3% 1
6.	3	1	-	13.3% 4
7.	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	53% (16)	23% (7)	23% (7)	100% 30

Table 6.6

Sets out the distribution sample with  
reference to employment (paid work) and age

Table 6.6

WMPn age and work

	AGE			
WORK	21-30	31-40	41-60	TOTALS
F/time	4	6	7	17 56/6%
P/time	10	1	-	11 36.6%
Housewife	2	-	-	
TOTALS	53% (16)	23% (7)	23% (7)	30

We know from the previous table 6.3 that 16 women of the subsample 'A' are refugees. Table 6.6 above shows that 17 out of 30 were in full-time work and only two were unpaid housewives.

It is important to consider the different living conditions of this sample as these differences in place of residence have significant consequences for the women which I will describe later.

Table 6.7

Living conditions

	<u>No. of women</u>
1. Living <u>with</u> one or both parents or <u>very near</u> them	15
2. Living <u>with</u> inlaws or <u>near</u> them	6
3. Living in her own dowry house with a relative (brother/grandparent)	7
4. Living in her own dowry or rented house alone	2
TOTAL	30

It is not enough to present the living conditions in terms of place of residence. It is crucial to

consider the degree of support offered by the Kin of these women. On the basis of the information given to me in the interview, I have constructed three categories of support.

- 1) Economic support: food, clothes, accommodation and incidental expenses are supplied.
- 2) Psychological support: here members of the Kin took a great interest and showed concern by spending time talking about problems, by visiting or by looking after young children.
- 3) Familial marginalisation: this refers to a situation of economic support accompanied by pressure to conform closely to the values and practices of the dominant Kin with loss of personal freedom. This essentially is a situation of moral blackmail.

Some of the women of course, belong to more than one of these categories.

Table 6.8

Degree of support by her Kinship system (3)

	Economic Support	Psych'l. Support	F. M. (4)
Family of origin	60% (18)	66.6 (20)	23.3 (7)
Own children	6.6% (2)	50% (15)	23.3 (7)
In-laws	16.6% (5)	23.3% (7)	13.3 (4)
Friends and or neighbours	3.3% (1)	10% (3)	3.3% (1)

It can be seen that 19 of the 30 women are in a situation of moral blackmail. The issue of support by the State was raised in all the interviews and in some cases a comparison was drawn between state support and family support. Fifteen women spoke about the fact that they had very little government support, five said that they quite appreciated periodical visits by the social workers and that they found the money they were given adequate while 10 said that they relied on social worker's visits and they were appreciative of state support.

(ii) Sub-sample B consisted of 94 women between the ages of 15 - 75, all residing in a small rural

community referred to in the thesis by the pseudonym 'Horio'.

Horio is the village where I was born and brought up. I chose it as the best rural social setting for my purposes for the following reasons. Firstly, since the village was very small with only 260 inhabitants, it was possible for me to interview all the women between the ages of 15 - 75 and compare the opinions of the older women with those of the young girls to establish the effects of modernisation on their attitudes. Secondly, the village had received a number of refugees who had arrived in waves during the period after the war, so that I was able to study the effects of dislocation on the women.

Thirdly, the geographical location of the village was an important consideration. The fact that it was only a short distance from Nicosia meant that it was affected by the urbanisation process (5). Between 1948 and 1963 many of the young men moved to the town for work or secondary education and settled there, returning to the village at weekends and for holidays. As a result the women had to cultivate the land in addition to their domestic work.

Finally, Horio is the village where I was born and brought up which gave me the advantages of being an 'insider' though because I was college and University educated and the first woman from the village to study abroad I also enjoyed something of an 'outsiders' status.

The methodology I used differed slightly from that used with sub-sample A. I did not use a formal interview but employed the techniques of Participant Observation. My initial contacts with this group were all made in person and not by letter or telephone because this seemed to be the best way to gain their trust and interest in my work which led them to communicate their thoughts and feelings about their position in a very natural and spontaneous manner. In addition to the data I gathered during my fieldwork in 1979 and early 1980 and two subsequent visits to Horio, in late 1980 and in 1981, I received some information through the post or over the phone from close relatives in the village and also from other, mainly young, women who considered the relationship we had developed during the fieldwork of such importance to them that they wished to confide to me more details about their life. This information proved particularly valuable.

Although I did not use a formal interview I concentrated in conversation on the following points:

1. Background data as gathered for WMPns.
2. Details about their engagement, marriage procedures and married life, where applicable.
3. Their economic activities inside and outside the home.
4. Their relationship to religion in general and the church.
5. Their attitudes to the social behaviour of other women.

The following tables explain the categories used when processing the data which was gathered during the fieldwork.

Table 6.9

Rural women: age and marital status

	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	TOTALS
Married	16	30	21	67
Single	15	3	-	18
Widowed	-	1	7	8
Wife of a Mpn	1	-	-	1

---

TOTALS    34.% (32)    36.% (34)    29.7%(28)    100.%(94)



The three single women in the age-group 31-45 referred to themselves with some bitterness as failures in life, because they had failed to get married. The widow in this group similarly felt that, though not a failure, she had, by becoming a widow, been relegated to the periphery of social life at one level, while, at another, she was the centre of critical, public attention.

Table 6.10

Rural women, age and education

Education	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	TOTALS
1	-	-	11	11
2	-	8	16	24
3	15	12	7	34
4	15	7	1	23
5	-	2	-	2
6	-	-	-	-
<hr/>				
	31.9(30)	30.%(29)	37.2%(35)	100.%(94)

The table shows clearly the tendency towards increasing education amongst rural women. The 11 completely illiterate women were all in the older age

group while the 8 women in the age group 31-45 who received only half primary education reflect the pressure from their parents to devote themselves to domestic affairs (house and family). It is significant that all the women in the age-group 15 - 30 received at least full primary education, though it is equally significant that only two of the 94 Rural women had been educated beyond secondary level, and none had gone to university.

Table 6.11 Rural women, age and work

WORK	AGE			TOTALS
	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	
Full-time	23	6	11	40
Part-time	5	12	16	33
Housework	10	6	9	25
TOTALS	38.4% (36)	23.53 (22)	38.29 (36)	94

The large number of women in full-time employment in the 15 - 30 age group is partly accounted for by the fact that the figure includes single women involved in full-time studies for the School-leaving certificate.

(iii) Sub-sample C consisted of 98 Urban women between the ages of 15 and 75. Sixty four of these were married women, twenty were single and 14 were separated or divorced. At the time of the interviews all 98 women resided in 'Poli', the pseudonym used for the urban setting I have chosen for the purposes of my research. Poli was selected because it is the biggest town in Cyprus, the capital of the Cypriot state and therefore, the centre of political activity. A second reason was the concentration there of refugee women. Since the Intercommunal conflict of 1963 (see Chapter 2 for more details). Poli had its 'Turkish quarter' and its 'Green Line' During the invasion the expansion of the Turkish quarter resulted in many Greek Cypriots becoming refugees. Of the 98 women interviewed 20 had refugee status.

As with subsample A, I located women by what I described as the 'snowball' technique, one contact leading to another. With sub-sample C however the methodology differed from that used in the case both of WMPns and of rural women. The great majority of subsample C was selected as having been educated to secondary level and beyond, in some case being University graduates, in order to make it possible to investigate women's attitudes to political involvement and paid professional work. This factor made it seem

appropriate to make the initial approach by a letter explaining my broad objectives and indicating what would be involved in participating. This was followed up by a formal interview of about 2-3 hours length at which, in addition to background information, the focus was on details of the womens' engagement, marriage, sexuality, battering, material well-being, and pleasures and problems. (See appendix 8).

The following tables give the details of subsample C.

Table 6.12

Urban women: age and marital status

MARITAL STATUS	AGE			TOTALS
	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	
1. Married	18	29	17	65.3% 64
2a.*Single	12	8	-	
2b.* <u>Not yet married</u>				
Consider themselves as those who failed to get married	(8)	(5)	-	20.40% 20
3. Separated/Divorced	2	11	1	14.2% 14
TOTALS	32/6% (32)	48.9% (48)	18.3 (18)	100% (98)

In the above table category 2 is subdivided into two groups: those young single women (15 - 30) who were not yet married but who hoped for marriage very soon and were optimistic towards society and single men since a single man was a potential suitor in their minds; and those single women between the ages of 31 - 45 who considered themselves as failures since they were not seen as potential wives but were regarded by society as old maids.

- \* This category of single women is split into two (a) and (b) in order to represent the difference between the 18 year old unmarried woman and the 28 year old one, or even the 32 year old single woman who considers herself a social failure since she was unable to attract a man who wanted to marry her.

Table 6.13

Urban women, age and education

Education	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	TOTALS
1. Illiterate	-	-	-	- 0 0
2. Half primary only	-	-	4	4% 4
3. Full primary only	1	5	3	9.1% 9
4. Full secondary only	9	6	3	19.3% 19
5. Further education only	13	18	5	36.7% 36
6. University or Higher Prof. training	9	18	3	30.5% 30
TOTALS	39.7% 39	48.9% (48)	18.3% (18)	100% 98

As the above table shows, only four of the urban women had not completed primary education, while the majority had gone on to full secondary, and in some case, further education. This was an important factor in their gaining full-time employment, especially as government employees. The table reveals a clear correlation between age and education reflecting an increasing tendency for women to be educated.

There is also some correlation between education and non-married status. As table 6.14 below shows, the eleven women in the age-group 31 - 45 who were divorced had all received further education and seven of them had been to a university, while the two divorced women in age-group 15 - 30 had also received further education.

Education seems to have been a factor both in helping these women to perceive their situation and in furnishing them with the economic means to act. The distribution of single women in these two age groups follows a similar pattern.

Table 6.14 Divorced (Urban) women's age  
and education

	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	TOTALS
1	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	1	1
5	2	4	-	6
6	-	7	-	7
TOTALS	2	11	1	14

Table 6.15 shows the distribution of sub-sample C with regard to age and work.

Table 6.15 Urban women, age and work

	AGE			
WORK	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 75	TOTALS
Full-time (work + studies)	21	35	13	70.4% 69
Part-time	1	5	3	9.18% 9
Housewife	8	7	5	20.4% 20
TOTALS	30.6% (30)	47.9% (47)	21.4% (21)	100% (98)

The table above shows a total of 69 out of the 98 women in full-time work, just over half of them belonging to the age-range 31 - 45. These were women whose children were old enough to stay at home unattended. As with subsample B (rural women) the figure for women between 15 - 30 in full-time employment, most of whom were single, includes those involved in full time studies.

#### 6.4 Methodology: Special problems

As indicated in the earlier part of this chapter I used a different interviewing technique with each of the three sub-samples. There is of course never any one method and it is essential that the method be linked to the problem. There was no point in using a method which may be objective and rigorous if it prevented the researcher from obtaining the information that s/he required. The information that I required depended entirely on the family and my relationship with it and especially the women in it. Therefore in order that I could secure the trust and security that these women had to feel in talking to me, this required a very open relationship which excluded any kind of closed questions or tick



schedules. The most essential thing in such interviews with third world women and probably women in general, is building up the relationships, using all possible means. I could have obtained information in a more objective, statistical way but such a method would be unethical in my view, as many of these women have been wounded and blemished by tragic events and every step towards bringing back memories or describing an unhappy situation one is in, adds to the existing pain. The pain becomes worse if the interviewer is an 'objective' academic researcher who shows no sympathy or emotions.

It was for these reasons that I adopted the materials outlined earlier, which were supplemented in the village by the ethnographic knowledge I had, and in the urban area by my own biography which I could draw on and was a rich resource.

During the course of my fieldwork, I encountered special problems. Some of these had to do with the fact that I belonged to the community I was studying. Others had to do with the fact that at the time of the fieldwork I belonged to the category of divorced women who find themselves in the lowest ranks of Cypriot society. I had to be careful about the information I gave about myself. The amount and nature of the

information that I released depended on the male who was present with the participant at the time of our first meeting and also on my assessment of his expectations of me, and was designed to facilitate the relationship with my informant.

One important factor which became apparent during the interview was whether the interviewee was alone with me throughout the time or whether other members of the family came in during the session. There was a distinct difference in this regard between rural and urban women, urban women almost always being seen entirely on their own, at their work place or in a separate room in their own house.

What effects did this have on how they responded to my questions and on what they did or didn't say? Clearly they would not disclose information which would affect the family members present. Beyond this, much depended on which member was present, the husband's presence affecting the interview most of all. For example (R24) had already expressed the hope that her only daughter would go on to secondary education and teacher training, but as soon as her husband entered, she reversed her opinion and generalised about the need for girls provided with dowry house to ensure their marriage. She then told me that, since the girl

was their only daughter, it was important that she remain in the village to look after them in their old age. While she said this, she was checking her husband's reaction to make sure she was saying the right thing.

On the one hand this distorts the information I was able to get, on that occasion. However, I always returned to continue the interview in such circumstances and took up the same point. In this case the interviewee explained that her husband would accuse her of being an undesirable influence, whereas a mother is expected to act as the mediator of the father's wishes between father and children, especially daughters.

On the other hand, the example shows how such interruptions are a rich source of information because they don't rely on the women's accounts but reveal directly the power relations in the family and the constraints on women's independent views.

Since the urban women were normally interviewed alone, this source of information was largely lacking.

### Social Class Groups

Another issue for discussion here concerns my problem of constructing social class categories. Creating groupings when studying Cypriot society is a difficult task because almost every category that I had to construct was original and I could not refer to any literature to assist me in this. In the case of rural women, especially of those mainly involved in productive activities of an agrarian nature, the way employment is categorised in the west does not apply at all. Moreover, I had to face the problem that all my categories were embedded in a culture very different from the European experience.

This problem was particularly acute when I attempted to categorise the women according to social class. Recent British work on women and social class (see Appendix ) for a fuller discussion) argues that women can no longer be legitimately categorised according to their husbands' positions at work because most women have now entered paid work and as a result occupy autonomous class positions .

In the case of contemporary Cypriot society this problem has become even more complex because of the

dislocation that resulted from the 1974 war and the loss of dowry property (house and fields) on which most rural women relied for their own contribution to the economy of their household.

I found it impossible to separate women's position from that of their families of origin or from their husband's position at work, although some of the women were earning enough to live on their "independent income". In a few cases my participants earned more than their husbands or fathers. However, women's autonomous class position is rarely indicated because of complexities that still surround the issue of class allocation. My attempt to construct social class categories relevant to women takes account of a combination of factors. In the case of married women the dowry and/or the woman's financial contribution through full-time or part-time waged work are added to the husband's financial status to make up their class position. For example, R14 is a woman who was well dowered, being the only daughter in the family, and her husband was a full-time farmer who also commuted to town to work as a small trader. Their joint income has improved her nominal class position since she is

enjoying a higher standard of living and she is therefore categorised in social class 3 instead of 5 where many of the older rural women are placed.

Similarly U5, a refugee woman from Poli, educated in Europe and from a trading background, has contributed her own wages to her husband's semi-professional background and is categorised in social class 1.

I considered, for single, divorced, separated and widowed women and the WMPns their own contributions from waged work, if any, and their father's class position.

The following table represents the first attempt, as far as I know, to categorize women in nominal social class groups taking into account a combination of factors. It has no claims to be the only possible categorization of women by class position in Cyprus.

Table 6.16

Women's class positions in the three  
different samples.

(Figures in parentheses are percentages of each group).

Sample	1	2	3	TOTALS
Social classes				
1. Upper professional, property owners, trading and commercial, Europe educated.	4 (13.3)	2 (2.1)	30 (30.6)	36 (16.2)
2. Lower middle classes secondary school teachers and civil servants.	5 (16.7)	12 (12.8)	35 (35.7)	47 (21.2)
3. Small traders, shopkeepers and skilled workers.	6 (20.0)	6 (6.4)	10 (10.2)	22 (9.9)
4. Workers, urban-based or commuters to the town on monthly or weekly contracts.	2 (6.7)	28 (29.8)	6 (6.1)	34 (15.3)
5. Peasant landholders, shepherds and agricultural workers.*	13 (43.3)	24 (25.5)	16 (16.3)	53 (23.9)
TOTALS	30 (100)	94 (100)	98 (100)	222 (100)

\*Peasant landholders is a group including big and small land owners. The differences of landownership in Cyprus are not comparable to those of Italy or the 'tsiflikades' in Greece so I grouped them together.

If the social class composition is examined then it is clear that in all sub-samples except 2, the rural

sample, social classes 1 and 2 are over-represented and in sub-sample 3 the representatives of the working class are seriously under-represented. The bias in the sample, especially in the urban sub-sample is the result of the bias I introduced which favoured educated women. As I pointed out earlier, I do not claim that the sample is representative; now it is possible to see where the bias is, and in which sample. There are two reasons for the bias in the samples. The first I have already mentioned. The second reason for the over-representation of social class groups 1 and 2 arises out of the construction of the groups themselves. It will be remembered that the social class group membership of the women was determined by adding their contribution, dowry, education and waged work to the father's or, more commonly, the husband's characteristic, then the numbers in social class groups 1 and 2 would have been smaller.

#### Social class and attitudes to women

For the purposes of this research social class position was examined in relation to attitudes towards women. I was interested to see the relation between social class origin according to the definitions used in the thesis and social attitudes towards women. For



this purpose I constructed categories concerning attitudes expressed by male members of the families to which my participants belonged, or in some cases conveyed to me by the women themselves, or which I observed when collecting data during the fieldwork from individual families.

Category (I) Attitude to Education concerns the desirability of education for girls, especially where resources are scarce: should money be spent on secondary and further education for a girl, instead of or as well as for a boy in a family?

Category (II) Attitude to Career for women concerns the attitude to a woman who wishes to pursue a professional career. This is linked with category (I), because without education a woman cannot enter a professional career. However it is also linked with the social class group, irrespective of the attitudes to education of the girl and cultural background of her family. A bourgeois family may desire education for their daughter in order to increase her chances of a "good marriage" but there may be no desire for the woman to enter the professions, which would divert from her "natural" role as a housewife and mother.

Category (III) Attitude to Public Life concerns to the possibilities of active participation in public life: by this I mean membership and active involvement in the hierarchy of the trade unions, the political parties or even the charitable organisations.

Category (IV) Attitude to appropriate female behaviour is concerned with the restrictions of the code of behaviour to which a woman is expected to conform.

Category (V) Attitude to sexual conduct and marriage concerns the attitudes to the possibilities for premarital or extra marital affairs that Cypriot women may or may have not have according to their class position.

Category (VI) Attitude to divorce describes the attitudes to the divorced women if they were to pursue a second marriage.

In table 6.17 I have represented a general picture of the society under study, both in rural and urban settings in relation to various issues that I considered important indicators of the position of women. In terms of category (I) my indication shows that people from social class 1 tend to reproduce

TABLE 6.17

## SOCIAL CLASS GROUPS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN

Categories	I. Attitudes to education with respect to gender and second and further education.	II. Attitudes to women pursuing a professional career.	III. Attitudes to active participation of women in public life.	IV. Code of behaviour expected of women.	V. Attitude to premarital and extra marital affairs.	VI. Attitudes to divorced women for pursuing a second marriage.
<b>Social class groups</b>						
1. Upper professional, trading and commercial, property owners, urban based, Europe educated.	Positive	Not prejudiced	Some prejudice	ladylike behaviour Participation in charity work - not open freedom in relationships.	More tolerant attitude.	Slightly favourable.
2. Lower middle classes (secondary and primary school teachers, junior civil servants, other skilled/trained caring professions.	Positive	Rather prejudiced	Prejudiced	Some freedom in relationships. Woman is preferred to know about sex - the world, but be careful of her name.	Tolerant in some cases	Slightly favourable
3. Small traders, shopkeepers and artisans.	Quite positive	Prejudiced	Prejudiced	Woman better not to know about sex - she might fall.	Negative	Unfavourable
4. Workers, urban based or commuters to city on monthly or weekly based contracts.	Negative. Need to introduce their girls into waged work at factories or other regular jobs.	Very prejudiced	Very prejudiced	Woman always considered the 'not yet fallen'. Need for protection through strictness.	Negative	Negative
5. Peasant landholders, shepherds and agricultural workers.	Negative. Need to use the girls' labour for farming and other work.	Very prejudiced	Very prejudiced	'The 'not yet fallen' attitude. Need to protect her. Generally strict codes of behaviour for women as compared to men in varying degrees.	Very negative	Very negative

themselves through their positive attitude to girls' education. The same positive attitude is expressed by social class 2: it is held, that is, by all those who are agents of symbolic control. The explanation I offer for this is that most of the people belonging to this class have experienced hardships during their studies because they usually come from a peasant or urban working class background and recognise the value of social mobility achieved through education. Thus they hold aspirations for their daughters as well as their sons.

On the other hand social classes 4 and 5 usually have a negative attitude towards educating a girl, especially if the resources are scarce. It is here that class and patriarchy meet.

An interesting phenomenon, and very much to the heart of this thesis, is the attitude of the petty bourgeoisie class 3 - that is, the lower middle classes of traders, shopkeepers and artisans who hold quite a positive attitude towards education but are very prejudiced against women pursuing a professional career. Patriarchy in this class is strong. The women are offered the opportunities for education but not the chance to exploit the experience for personal

and professional advancement, in order to gain independence and perhaps to depart from the expected roles of housewife and mother.

What is of interest is that social class groups 1, 2 and 3 hold a positive attitude to the education of women irrespective of the extent to which they share other attitudes. In as much as social class 1 is relatively the most tolerant social class group, one could speculate that education agencies (school, university) might well be crucial agencies for raising and changing the consciousness of women providing that (a) women attend these agencies and (b) they mix socially and culturally with women from social class groups 1 and 2. It may be that in as much as there is class regulated differential opportunity to take advantage of education beyond compulsory schooling then the differences between the positioning of women in patriarchal ideology and prejudice will follow social class lines and this will serve to divide women along class lines with respect to change in women's position. The higher social class women are in <sup>the more they are struggling</sup> /towards an active change in their position where as women from the lower social class groups are struggling within the oppression of their patriarchal positioning or taking such positioning for granted.

## 6.5 Overview

I have here described the methods used to create the three subsamples upon which my ethnography is based. I have set out the characteristics of the women in terms of marital status, regional distribution, education and occupation. I have also given the grounds for the selection of the characteristics which typified the subgroups. Further in the case of the WMPns I have attempted to assess both their residential location, that is with whom the women were living, and the degree of support they received from their kin. Clearly this estimate carries a measure of subjectivity but it was essential to develop some kind of index in order to show both the living conditions and the familial quality of their lives in order to expose fundamental features of their situation. The index shows that 19 out of 30 of these women were placed in a situation I called moral blackmail. They were given support but at a cost of living their lives according to rules set by those supporting them.

My sample of rural women with particular reference to age was widely spread (from a 15 year old to a 75 year old woman) so that I could study both single women and the aged women. Table 6.1a shows the tendency towards

increased education among rural women; all the women in the age group 15-30 received at least primary education; it is also true, however, that only two out of the 94 women in the rural sample have been educated beyond secondary level. In the case of the urban sample I deliberately insured that a high proportion of the women had received secondary education or beyond so that I could examine these women's attitudes to political involvement and paid professional work. Indeed, only 4 out of the women in the urban sample had not completed primary education. Interestingly, I found that there was a definite relation between level of education and non marital status. The 11 women in the age group 31-45 who were divorced had all received further education and some had been to university. The two divorced women in the age group 15-30 had also received some further education as shown. Table 6.4 illustrates a similar relation. Clearly education in this urban sample plays a critical role in the opening of choices for women in Cyprus. Despite many problems including those arising out of the subjectivity of the method, it seems to me to be important to constitute a nominal social class scale based upon both the women's and the husband's position with respect to education and occupation, dowry and, where appropriate, that of the family of origin. The distribution shows that the

samples are biased. Indeed the urban sample was selected with a bias towards the higher social class groups. On the bases of my interviews with women I attempted to show the relationships between the social class position of the women and attitudes towards women with respect to education, career, public life, codes of behaviour and attitudes to sex and divorce. Not unexpectedly the higher social groups held relatively liberal attitudes to education whereas the lower social groups held the most restricted attitudes. Perhaps the most interesting finding is that of social class 3 "small traders shopkeepers and artisans". Although for this group the attitudes to the education of women was favourable this was also linked to disapproval of such women pursuing a career, in the general context of highly restrictive attitudes. The education of the women was favoured because it was thought to enhance their marital opportunities; case of the intersection between class position and patriarchy.

I have in this chapter tried to provide a general statistical description of the distinguishing characteristics of the women in my three samples. In the following chapter I will be concerned with a different kind of description which places these women in the context of their living practices.



TABLES FOR CHAPTER 6

- 6.1 The three samples and geographical mobility of the women due to marriage or the war.
- 6.2 Total sample, marital status and regional residence
- 6.3 Total sample as affected by the 1974 war
- 6.4 Age distribution
- 6.5 WMPn, age and education
- 6.6 WMPn, age and work
- 6.7 Living conditions
- 6.8 Degree of support by her kinship system
- 6.9 Rural women, age and marital status
- 6.10 Rural women, age and education
- 6.11 Rural women, age and work
- 6.12 Urban women, age and marital status
- 6.13 Urban women, age and education
- 6.14 Divorced urban women's age and education
- 6.15 Urban women, age and work
- 6.16 Women's class positions in the three different samples.
- 6.17 Social class groups and attitudes towards women

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 6

1. Total number of the refugee population as given by official sources

2. The terms 'fallen' and 'not yet fallen' were used by Sarah Ladbury in her discussion of Turkish Cypriot women (1979). They are equally relevant to the experiences of Greek Cypriot women

3. Support offered to WMPns from relatives could be economic, in terms of food and clothing, or psychological, in terms of looking after young children or visiting the woman and accompanying her out.

4. Familially Marginalised (F.M.) are all those WMPns who were given some support by their kinship system but had to pay for it by losing their freedom of movement and power of decision making concerning themselves and their children.

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## CHAPTER 7: RURAL WOMEN

### 7.1 Introduction

### 7.2 The Village Context - the socio-economic structure of the village

- Demography
- The nature of local government
- Land onwership (map (1))
- The layout of Horio (map (2))
- The economy of Horio
- Local legend and belief

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### 7.6 Conclusion: Women against women

## CHAPTER 7: RURAL WOMEN

## 7.1 Introduction:

This chapter concentrates on analysing the fieldwork I carried out as participant observer in the rural setting of Horio among its women. Through the fieldwork and the analysis of the data, an attempt is made to identify the way women are socially and economically positioned in this rural community. What emerges most strikingly from my interviews is the oppressiveness of existing power relations and the force with which they are reproduced by social practices and institutions. Central among these are the institutions of marriage and the family and the social processes and relations which produce and are reproduced by them.

As I explained in my Introduction Horio is the village where I was born and brought up. I chose it as the best rural social setting to start my empirical work for the reasons set out there: in particular the special knowledge and access available to a researcher digging where s/he has his/her roots if not precisely where s/he 'stands'. I should add that although a native of Horio, I did have an outsider's status,

largely because I was college and university educated, and the only woman born there to study abroad. From the start my contacts with the women observed and interviewed were very friendly, with us chatting and reminding one another of our relationships when I was living in the village. The old women would recall when I was a baby in my mother's arms and how I looked to them at the time, and their comments about my future appearance, for example: "I told your mother you would be a tall girl....." or "your eyes were green as they are now. I was right, you took after your granny. I loved her very much.... she was a kind woman but very unlucky....."

Putting myself forward and divulging my secrets to them - that is talking about my own life - made it easier for most of them to trust me and talk about such issues, which Cypriot society avoids and represses. (As far as possible, Cypriots avoid discussions on any private matter in public, that is outside the family, and many intimate matters are taboo within it). My dual status, as native and outsider, no doubt also contributed to Horio women's willingness to discuss openly with me matters that they might have been reluctant to approach with permanent, inside members of the community. In fact

the real purpose of that chatting was to overcome the problem discussed by D. Leonard (1980).

There is always a vast difference between what sociological interviewers are explicitly told and the ways in which in their daily lives people really go about the matters on which they are being interviewed. When sensitive areas are touched upon, as in the case of questions about attitudes towards their personal lives, it can be expected that the gap will be very wide. (1)

I feel confident that the time I spent socialising with my participants helped enormously towards overcoming this defensiveness and any distrust so that the gap between what the interviewers said and the way they lived may well have been bridged. Finally, of course, the fact that as participant observer I was a woman talking to women gave me, access to the kind of material that no male researcher could hope to have.

It will be noted that marriage and the family became the central point of all the interviews of this research. This was inevitable given the fact that the prevailing beliefs and practices allow women no proper function outside marriage and their reproductive, subservient role as wives and mothers. Horio women gave a detailed description of what preceded and followed the 'three day' ceremonies of their marriage referring to all the rituals when they were embarrassed to say things outright. The fact that they



took refuge in describing the rituals surrounding marriage when questions became more personal and demanding, breaking down the well-guarded, privacy of the household, shows their difficulty in expressing and revealing thoughts and values at their deepest level. In particular, their response to questions on intimate matters - sexuality etc. was preceded by a description of a related ritual.

Monica Wilson in D Leonard (1980) argues about people in general and their tendency to use rituals by suggesting that they

express in ritual what moves them most and since the form of expression is conventionalised and obligatory it is the values of the group which are revealed. (2)

So in Horio we will see that rituals express group values rather than the particular emotions and desires of individual women.

Finally one surprising finding which I would like to mention from the beginning is what I call the 'Myth syndrome' which was a reality at Horio. By this I mean the social pressure and control exercised on women, according to their marital status, on issues

related to morals; this was accomplished by using ancient or folk stories as examples of exemplary conduct by women of the glorious past. It was a very effective measure of community control over the disadvantaged individuals, especially after 1974.

## 7.2 The village context; the socioeconomic structure

### Demography

Horio is a small agrarian community in the Nicosia district 14 miles from the capital. It is a village of approximately 260 inhabitants, (population as between 1975-1980), and is situated at the foot of the Troodos mountains in a semi-mountainous area with mixed agriculture. The population of this village was more or less static for years until 1974; that is, not more than 200 inhabitants who between the 1950s and 1970s experienced their village being discriminated against in terms of public development works. During my fieldwork in 1979-80 sixty refugee people were settled there, who came from North Cyprus in the years 1974-1979. The other 200 Horiates are mainly natives with the teachers and the priest only staying in the village when their services to this small community were required. That is, some teachers stayed in the

village during the school year from September to June in a specially provided house. The priest who resided in a nearby village, also stayed in the village over the weekend for the Mass, baptisms, weddings or other religious events that Horiates called him for.

By 1980 this was the demographic picture of Horio.

Table 7.1

The population of Horio by age and sex.

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Source: Mouhtar's register book 1980.

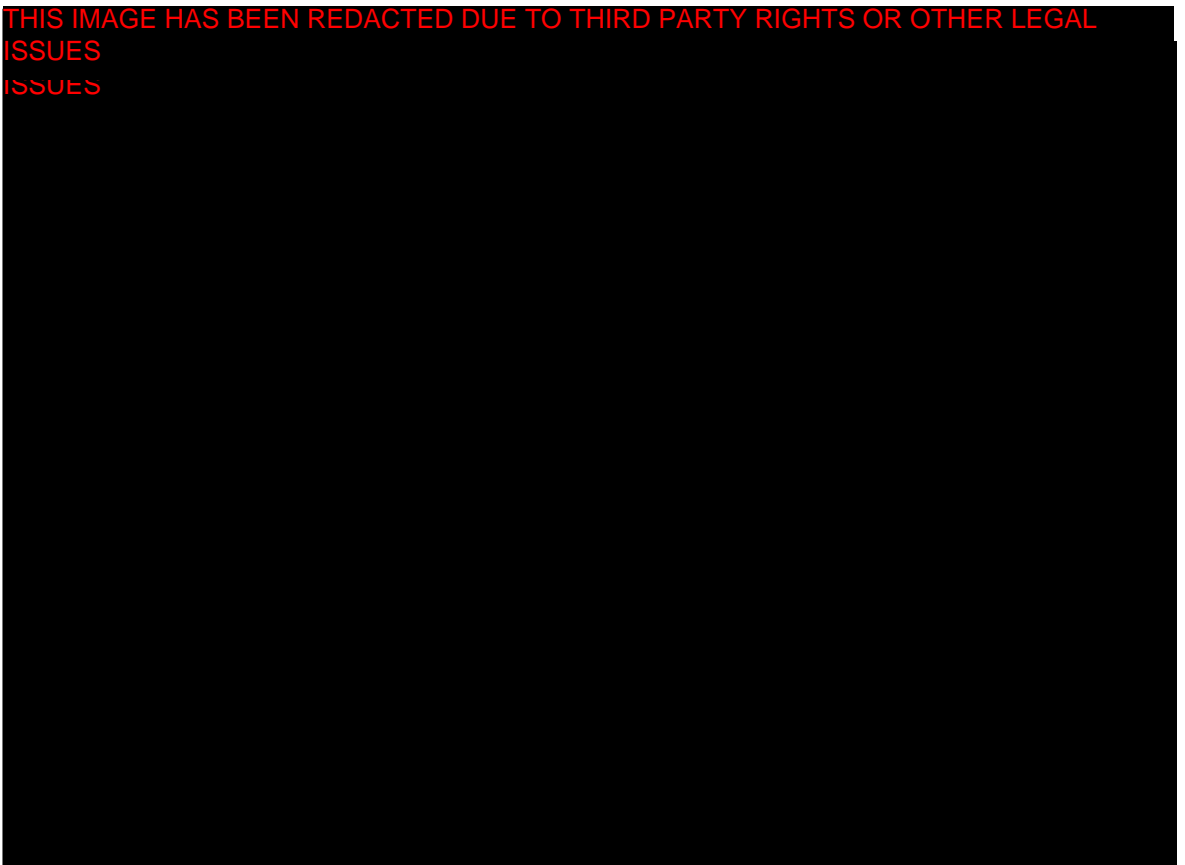
At the time of my fieldwork the village had only 70 households, (37 old and 33 new or recent units) and offered me, as a researcher, the opportunity to study closely 94 women from the age of 15 up to the age of 75 years old. Of these 94 women, 68 were married, 17 were single (three of whom were over 28 years old and

therefore unlikely, in the context of Horio, to marry) 8 were widowed and one was a WMPn. Of the 260 Horiates 60, as mentioned above, were refugees from Kyrenia, Nicosia and Famagusta districts who came in family groupings in 1974, 1975 and even continued arriving in 1978 and 1979.

The refugee population at the time of fieldwork consisted of 12 families who came from the following occupied areas:

Table 7.2

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ISSUES



Of these families 10 have built their own 2 or 3 roomed houses, on building plots offered by the government; this land was either rented out to Horiates before for cultivation or was infertile, usually called halitikon (common land). The other 2 were given land by their fathers-in-law already resident at Horio as native Horiates and land-owners. These 12 refugee families have built their 'house' but not their 'home'. As they all said, although they came to Horio because they had relatives or friends their longing to go back was still very strong. Out of this refugee population 15 women were interviewed.

According to the Church register 21 Horiates and Horiatisses married and made a home outside the village between the years 1961 and 1971, as compared to three new households that started there. From 1971 to 1975 6 new houses have been built and 6 out of nine newly married couples settled in Horio. Electricity, running water, asphalted roads leading to the village from three directions were eventually provided in the late 1970s and the presence of the refugee population helped to stabilise Horio. So, by 1979/1980 there were 260 inhabitants according to the Mouchtar's register (in April 1980) and about 22 children in the declining school population.

Table 7.3

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The nature of local government at Horio

It is not my purpose here to discuss local politics in a small rural community in post 1974 Cyprus; previous researchers have embarked on such a discussion (see for example P. Loizos 1975 and P.Sant Cassia 1981.) I merely wish to outline the structure of local government and illustrate the way in which local politics can affect women in spite of their effective exclusion from them.

Horio like other Cypriot villages has a Mouchtar (headman) and three azades (councillors) elected by the villagers (and, exceptionally, in 1978, appointed by the government). The three councillors are supposed, ideally, to represent the different points of view of local political groups, although it was not until the 1980 election, when young councillors belonging to different political parties were elected for the first time, that this actually happened in Horio. The function of these officials is to fix water rates, school rates and so on, and to co-operate with the 'agrofilakas', the official appointed by central government to oversee the administration of land, especially pasture, given that disputes among shepherds and farmers are an ever present feature of rural Cyprus.

The other important source of village organization is the priest and the church committee which has three members. Their responsibility is to look after the local church building and property. One of their special tasks is to have one representative in church every Sunday during mass to take the collection. Another is to look after any needs of the priest in terms of preparing for religious festivals, for example Easter processions and decorations. It is by virtue of their official position that the individuals

on the church committee gain prestige and consequent influence in the affairs of the village. They are invested with the authority of the church and tend to be given privileged seats, in all public gathering-places including coffee shops.

### Landownership

According to the official records of the Department of Lands and Surveys there were 75 large and small landowners in Horio at the period of the fieldwork, who owned altogether about 6,000 donums (3). The biggest landowners were the State and the Church. The government owned about 2,000 donums as common land. Some of these fields or land were offered to those refugee families who agreed or wanted to stay in Horio, to be used as building plots or small irrigated pieces of land for growing vegetables.

The monastery owned about 1,400 donums as well as many old olive trees which yielded more olives and thus more oil than the new trees which were in fields owned by various individuals. Also the small Church of St. Marina owned about 450 donums of land and some olive trees, mainly donations by the Christian faithful. There is another religious organisation that owns land and trees in Horio and that is the Turkish



EFKAF (4) which owns land acquired in 1571 with the Ottoman occupation or donated later by Turks who lived in or around Horio.

Before 1960, the monastery, and through it the Archbishopric of Nicosia, was the key to land tenure and therefore was responsible for much social conflict in the village. Since 1960 it has continued to be so, not least through its divisive practice of selling land, often through a kind of closed shop, to those who had been prominent members of EOKA during the 1955 - 1959 Independence struggle. These same villagers favoured by the Church tend already to be the richest and most reactionary in the community. In this way, as the major land owner, the Church has exercised enormous economic power.

The Church still wields this power. Every year auctions take place in late August or September and sometimes fields and olive trees are offered for rent at high prices, for periods of one, two or three years.

The old monastery of St. Michael, now a convent with three nuns and a leader (proistameni), is at the top of a hill overlooking the village. This monastery is very old and according to the "Proistameni" Sister

Mariam (oral communication), it dates back to the 11th century A.D. although nobody has attempted to write its history yet. It has had a lot of visitors-donators and has played an important role in the economic and social life of Horio. In fact as I shall explain below, the monastery played the role of the landlord, lending out land and olive trees from the property donated to it by devoted Christians over the years. Because of its importance as a landowning institution we will devote a few more lines to it.

According to information that I was able to gather orally from the Mouchtar in July 1979, in 1700 AD two Russian visitors went to this monastery and found it deserted. One book that he cited, without being able to give full reference (Cypriot studies - book about Stavrovounin), describes the monastery as a very wealthy, once flourishing institution which paid the central Archbishopric very regularly and which had property spread over the whole area from the edge of the town towards the nearby villages. It had its own machinery for extracting oil from olives, for baking bread, and for hiding things from the Ottomans and British tax collectors. In 1930 it was abandoned again. The last monk died and was buried there.

In 1971 the proistameni was sent there by the Archbishopric to look after the monastery. Three other nuns followed her. They redecorated the monastery and attracted the attention of the tourist office and the archaeological service, thereby gaining some money for its expenses.

This village, Horio, turned out to be, in its main characteristics, exactly what I had been looking for in terms of typicality and access. In some of its general features it had a lot in common with other villages, both Greek and Turkish Cypriot, in Cyprus or villages in Greece and even other mediterranean countries, e.g. Italy, Spain, Portugal.

#### The Layout of Horio

In terms of its geographical features and consequently agricultural products as well as in terms of its social structure and values Horio can be considered typical. I had the advantage of living in a large household and through that had contacts with the two largest families (in terms of numbers, prestige and wealth) of the village; moreover this house was in the centre of the village next to coffee shop 2, opposite to coffee shop 1 and also the post office and diagonally opposite to the only other shop, the co-op, which was a gathering place for women from different neighbourhoods.

In terms of architectural structural points of sociological importance I would like to mention here that the dominant features in this community are the 'Age Old' Church of Saint Marina with the cemetery attached to it, and the school, a colonial building, next to it on the side of the most prominent hill near the village. The position of the Church and the old School, side by side as the highest reference points in this village remind the visitor of the 'AKROPOLIS' of the Ancient Greek cities or the Italian 'CAMPANILISMO' - the village bell towers. (5)

The old and the new: the traditional and the modern side by side

Part of grandmother's house was demolished to build a modern dowry house for the young girl whose prospects for marriage relied considerably on the value of her dowry.

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Some old parental traditional homes have been demolished in Horio so as to make space to build a new modern house for the dowry of the daughter or granddaughter. A 64 year old woman said:

These new luxurious houses are eating our fields. Bridegrooms today ask for big expensive houses and if the parents of the girl say or give the impression that they cannot build as nice a house as everybody else then the future son-in-law sends his proposals to the next girl down the road whose father is or seems to be a man who has already shown how nice a dowry-house he has given to his first daughter. (R16)

In the photograph (see previous page) taken by this researcher during the fieldwork (May 1980) a modern luxurious house lies side by side with the old mud-brick house with its traditional veranda, 'balkoni' the entrance door and its 'klimateria' the climbing vine, the natural shade for summer gatherings. As Nikita says:

This sharp architectural dualism is the physical manifestation of the discontinuity that is so much a characteristic of the underlying social order. And this social discontinuity is the product of what may be called 'urbanisation' or 'modernisation.' (1978:72)

She indicates in her article on the family the social significance of the physical appearance of the village by describing in detail the way traditional and modern homes are constructed, the way they are physically

related to each other and the interaction between the physical environment and the individual. I, too, found that these architectural features were prominent and important in Horio.

### The Economy of Horio

Horio is a peasant community based on agriculture, with even the eleven households which (on the basis of the husband's job) could be categorised as 'professional' having land and other real estate, for example, orchards and olive trees, to look after during their spare time. This gives them not only agricultural products for family/household consumption, but marketable products for extra income as well. The village lies just below the Troodos mountains; there are small hills between it and the pine forest. The whole village is surrounded by olive trees, fig trees, vineyards and fields for corn and wheat.

Mixed agriculture has always been the predominant activity in Horio since it is an inland village with fertile land of varied capacity from corn and wheat to fresh vegetables, lemon trees and grapes, as well as hillsides for pasture. The agricultural land is approximately 4,500 donums. Villagers have their

inherited plots of land widely scattered so as to ensure that they are fairly distributed, lack of rain and poor harvest in one area being compensated by good harvest in another area. Thus the agricultural land is divided into parcels, lots belonging to farmers, other native Horiates now residing outside the village, the Church and the State. The idea of compact holdings is completely new and most probably unacceptable in Horio, given that the tradition of family land is highly valued and observed. Between the 1920s and 1960s Horio acted as a more or less self-sufficient economic unit with the village crafts and agricultural products easily available and exchangeable between the inhabitants. After the Independence of Cyprus in 1960 some change slowly started to infiltrate the economy of the island in general and Horio in particular. Tins and mass-produced products have filled the newly-established Co-op shop and factory baked bread has taken the place of home-made wheat bread baked by housewives.

The jobs of full-time farmer and shepherd were the most prestigious and sought after, after the learned positions of teachers and priests till the 1950s. By the 1950s and 60s, when education spread and land became more scarce, young male Horiates were commuting

to the town in order to become skilled craftsmen. Very slowly young females followed on a seasonal basis; that is, after harvest, grape-picking and olive-picking, when agriculture no longer needs female labour, women commute to the town for part-time or full-time work in small factories and light industry. Especially when mechanization entered the agricultural patterns of Horio, young people had much more free time from agriculture and moved towards the towns first as workers and later as migrants; this seriously affected the demography of the village between the 50s and 60s.

#### Local legend and belief

In rural societies proverbs and sayings are especially important. Here is an example of a local Horio legend and belief to illustrate this. According to the Muchtar's register the population of the village did not exceed 200 until the events of 1974. There was a local legend explaining why the village did not acquire a bigger number of people; 'not more than 200', as old people in the village say:

Every time a new person was born in Horio one of the existing adults emigrated or died. It was cursed by a bishop who passed through the village on his way to the monastery. His mule (or horse) was thirsty and the bishop's 'moularis' who was leading the mule asked everywhere in the village



for water. It was a very hot July day. Not a well had water in it; all had dried up. And nobody suggested going to the famous spring behind the hill to fetch water for the bishop's mule. So he took revenge on the villagers by cursing their village. Since the bishop was God's representative his wish was fulfilled.....  
(Husband of R17 - a 78 year old farmer.)

Moreover, in conversation, the husbands of R17 and R15 assured me that the above story was true.

This story goes back to the years of the Ottoman occupation. For many years the Horiates accepted and believed that this was the reason for the underdevelopment of their village in comparison to the relative expansion and modernisation of other nearby villages which were affected by being near the capital of the island.

As Gramsci (amongst others) has argued, these forms of 'common beliefs' are very important. Within this village much of the traditional way of life and thought has been preserved by the middle-aged and old people. But while a degree of traditionalism has survived, at the time of my fieldwork, this co-existed with a considerable pressure towards modernity. The young people of this village have, through their contact with the capital, the other towns of the island and the refugees from towns and bigger villages in the north, been baptised with the new ideas and

ways of life which they cannot follow in their personal everyday village life. This may be a common phenomenon in many contemporary small village societies in which the old and the new have not become so fused as to be indistinguishable.

Horio shares with other villages that strong sentiment, of common locality, morality and identity, the value which Pratt (1980) describes as a 'sense of place' and Pitt Rivers (1963:30) as a 'strong sense of local patriotism'. On the same issue, P Sant Cassia (1981:21) in his study of Peyia in another district of Cyprus, speaks about 'villagers' values (6). The inhabitants of Horio share with the rest of Cyprus the set of four characteristics (as outlined in section 7.5 ) which give a Greek Cypriot high status. Additionally, they feel proud of belonging to Horio, which has a very good name for the 'morality' of its women and the patriotism of its men. Horio's strong sense of place is highlighted by the fact that immigrants from Horio in the U.K. for example, are organised in an association of their own and consider as their co-villagers all those second and third generation immigrants from Horio as pure Horiates, trustworthy and different - meaning better - from other Cypriots in England. Marriages between second and third generation Horiates in the U.K. are highly desirable and sought after.

Between the 1950s and 1970s Horio experienced an intensive emigration movement both inland and abroad. There was always constant communication with the more urban-orientated world, that is the big villages nearby and the suburbs to which a lot of Horiates moved. Young single and married men used to find temporary jobs in these places when seasonal agricultural work was finished. After Independence, in 1960, and when the first Five-year Development plan was put into practice, all the other villages around Horio acquired piped running water, electricity and asphalted roads which made life easier and much more enjoyable for people living in them. New modern houses spread along the new roads of these villages, except for Horio; their numbers grew, the economy of these villages flourished and communications with the centre were made extensive. Horio was completely neglected, mainly because of its low numbers and the inactivity of the village headman, who was criticised by Horiates as a selfish person who could work and fight only for his own interest instead of the common interests of the village. The government found various excuses not to invest in electricity and piped water in Horio until the late 1960s. By then a lot of young people, both men and women, saw the situation in their village as an anomaly as compared to the surrounding district and, not believing in governmental promises of efforts

to abolish the discrimination, left the village and married elsewhere in order to enjoy the modern facilities and job opportunities in a developing Cypriot economy.

### 7.3 The family as an Economic Unit: Women and work

In the second section of this Chapter I have provided a general outline of the socio-economic structure of Horio. The only members of the community not bound together at extended family level are the school teacher and the priest; even the latest refugee families who arrived in 1981 are now bound through marriage into the village.

Before going on to consider the beliefs and values which permeate the community, enshrined in the institution of marriage and the practices surrounding it and produced by it, I want to outline the socio-economic structure of the smallest unit, the nuclear family. After all, it is only by understanding the complex relationship of material conditions to received sets of beliefs and social practices that we can hope to understand how power relations are fixed to the detriment of women, and the patriarchal investment in their maintenance and reproduction.

I shall do this by presenting examples extracted from my interviews which show how the women of Horio are bound to the husbands, fathers and families which confine and define them. The examples show the nuclear family as the given basic economic unit, something which can be read off almost from all the extracts from my interviews with rural women no matter what the subject under discussion: the nuclear family that aspires to economic autonomy, all its members contributing their labour to agricultural production from an early age. In the case of poorer families we see economic dependence on the larger unit, the extended family; and, in many cases, the extended family operates as an economic unit; one Horio extended family, for instance, was able to hire a considerable amount of land from the Church because it could call on 13 children and 4 in-laws besides the father and, of course, his wife.

As I have stressed, Horio depends mainly on agricultural production, to which women's work is central. I give here some accounts and descriptions of this central and taken-for-granted nature of women's involvement in productive work. I begin with reminiscences since many of these women, coming from a poor peasant background, can recall stories of their childhood in which their mother, grandmother and/or a

neighbour were ordered by males, be they their fathers, husbands, brothers or even adult sons, to finish with the baking of home-made bread, prepare lunch and be ready by dawn to follow them to the fields for harvest - unlike the other (male) workers who had a good night's sleep. The women would force themselves to breaking point in order to finish the housework and be able to work in the fields during the day. As a 59 year old woman, mother of six, said:

I had to get up at 5.00 a.m., prepare and cook the bread before my father and husband were ready to go out for ploughing. If one of the children was ill or woke up and prevented me from finishing, my father would start his terrible shouting at me. In the meantime I had to get the children ready for school; the young ones ready to go out in the fields with me. When all six children were young my life was unbearable. I had no mother (she died when I was young) to help me, no aunty near me, except my husband's sister who didn't have any children of her own and used to visit me whenever her husband allowed her to come to us. Nobody else gave me a hand during those difficult years. (R1)

This scene of a Cypriot mother breastfeeding her baby while leading a goat was common enough in rural Cyprus in 1912 when this photograph was taken. A similar photograph, but with the peasant woman in comparatively modern clothes could have been taken in the early 1960s when some of my Horio informants were giving birth to their first children and even in the

late 1970s (although the influence of western ideas in the last ten years would make it unusual today).

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MANA ΠΑΙΔΙ (Πιτσιλία)  
(1912)  
Φωτογραφία Ο.Ν.ΤΟΥΦΕΞΗ

MOTHER CHILD (Pitsilia)  
(1912)

The following three extracts provide further graphic illustration of women's double labour (domestic and agricultural) and double enslavement (to husband and children). A 54 year old woman who was actually relieved from productive labour by her marriage describes what she did instead:

I've never worked in other people's fields or been paid by anybody. That of course doesn't mean that I had an easy life; since I was 12 I worked in the fields helping my parents, as a young girl, during sowing and harvest, picking olives in Autumn, running after the young sheep in winter, in the orchards during spring, and picking grapes in summer. All the year round we were busy and I had to help.

I married a farmer, a 'bigger farmer' I must say. He always had workers for the fields and I had to feed them and keep an eye on them if he was not there. We had to start for the fields as soon as the sun rose and come back only when it set. There was nothing like an eight hour day for me, not to mention housework and my eleven children. (R39).

A 31 year old woman who married a less wealthy man than R39 describes her experience:

I was an orphan and very poor. My uncle and auntie who looked after me after my parents died got me engaged at the age of 15 and married me off at the age of seventeen, as soon as I became of age. The husband they chose for me was a young small farmer from a big family born in a nearby village. They built a house for us and we started our married life there, separated from them but still very dependent on them economically. Both of us worked in their fields and my husband was employed elsewhere as well for sowing or looking after flocks. I was always thin - 'tiny' as some people said, and I found the work in the fields very hard. But what could I do? (R4)



Finally a 47 year old woman describes her hardships, by now a familiar story.

Three months after the birth of my fourth child, Pampas, I had terrible stomach problems. Sickness every morning, very bad appetite during the whole day, I was breastfeeding him, my health was deteriorating, the other children needed me, the housework was all on my shoulders. I was an orphan. My mother died when I was young and I had nobody to help me with the children. My husband? He was unable to do his own work - looking after our fields, he needed my help, so I used to go out to the fields. I was torn in different directions.

I had to go to the doctor who visited the nearby village once every fifteen days. I used to pray for my children in case I was seriously ill and wished the illness was 'only a new pregnancy' - I didn't want another child but what could I do? (R74)

'What could I do' becomes something of a refrain. What these examples show is how women's effective unpaid full-time labour is essential to the maintenance of the family as a domestic unit. They do all the caretaking, and as an economic unit they work as their men work in the fields, as of duty. Their economic position is well expressed, therefore, in the additional fact that, they, along with the dowry they bring (usually the house), form the real economic links between their two families. Men's powerful economic interest in maintaining existing power relations is evident: much more than the maintenance of individual values is at stake, although these of course, are tied in with the economic relations

between men and women. Paradoxically, while women are tied to the dowries they bring with them in marriage and their value might be assessed according to these, they are perpetually in the position of the dependents of the men who take them with their dowries as well as of the men who supply them. The examples given above show clearly how starkly defined sexual power-relations are in economic terms; women have no control over their own labour or production (or reproduction).

These economic terms will be taken as read in my subsequent illustration and discussion of the concomitant sets of beliefs and practices of women in the social world of Horio.

The recollections of R52, a 69 year old Horiatisa, in particular, reinforce the other examples and my discussion of them, illustrating the additional point of unequal pay patterns which still persist. (See also Chapter 6.3)

It is significant that this woman, like the others, should perceive her oppressed position but be unable to criticise it effectively. This pattern is produced by the fact that the dominant set of beliefs and values, that is common sense, as it is produced by

patriarchal power relations, is largely internalised by these women. The ideas and practices which constitute the Horiatissa's identity have been the only ones available (a point encapsulated in the refrain 'what could I do?') This was evident when R52 went on to describe how guilty she felt about dragging her daughter out to work before she was even an adolescent; young and delicate she had been worn out by work that was too heavy for her. The guilt produced the revealing comment that at least, as a child, her daughter was not in moral danger of losing her reputation, as adolescent girls who work in the fields are popularly supposed to be (and, therefore, frequently are); the absurd degree to which the need to police women against their own and other's sexuality has its effects in Horio; it is evidenced by the story of the jealous husband of R3 a 32 years old woman. She felt guilty and comforted herself by subscribing to the popular myth that women are at continual moral risk and therefore in need of continual protection. Her internalisation of the oppressive common-sense construction of women's identity and positioning, and her unquestioning acceptance of patriarchal authority are, as I have said, typical given the absence of alternatives.

#### 7.4 The house/home at Horio

As in most other Mediterranean cultures the house is seen as a sanctuary from the everyday troubles of living in competitive communities. The members of a household have to be united and present a front of solidarity to the outside world. This solidarity will protect the interests of each member of the household unit if threatened by outsiders, even if they do not agree with each other inside. A high degree of social hypocrisy is employed and it works very well in hiding any problematic relations within the house and concealing their differences.

Where could this complete confidence and mutual trust be achieved? Only, it is believed, within the house, and a house of certain architectural design must take into account the fact that there are activities that can take place in the open space of the yard especially during the Spring, Summer and Autumn dry months. These are usually household chores like washing, chopping wood for the fire, baking bread for the family, making the tomato paste or 'trachanas' (from sour yogurt and wheat), hanging the beans and onions to dry. Since none of these activities are secret, neighbours are allowed to know and talk about them but when Horiates come to discussions which

demand any degree of privacy then the use of the 'dichoron' (the main room, usually the biggest one with an arch in the center) in the old traditional house and the guest room in the modern house, is preferred so that confidentiality will be ensured. (7)

Horiates and Horiatisses, like most other Cypriots, enjoy talking about what is going on around them and are curious about other people's business; this characteristic leads to a need for secrecy on the part of the person most likely to be talked about. Unfortunately for women, the burden of criticism, gossip and so the need for secrecy rests with them, since the eyes of the community, both men's and women's, are always on them. The closeness of some of the old houses had, and in some cases still has, a tremendous effect on the life of the women of the houses concerned. It is in a way the control system of the community over the housewife and the way she spends her time. Labels like clean/dirty, quick/slow, lazy/energetic, virtuous/non virtuous, are given to women mainly by unrelated, unkind, jealous neighbours.

One woman aged 34, for example, complained very fiercely about this reality in Horio and admitted that she feels as if she is trapped:

My second cousin M.... from Kato Geitonia, the neighbourhood at the edge of the village, (that is a person who lives so far away that she cannot see what I am doing) told me yesterday, after the Church service, that a non-related woman who visited me a few days ago told her that I had bought this and that dress, that my house was not very clean when she came in, and that my children were not well dressed, as she herself expected them to be: "What is she doing all day? Sitting with her hands crossed?"

I was so cross when I heard this gossip and I swear that I will never let such women enter my house again. I will open my door only to my closest friends and relatives who care about me.  
(R46)

As Du Boulay argues, there are collections of houses not belonging to the same neighbourhood who share loyalties and comments and judgements are passed from one family about another.

The family is seen to exist in the context of the community and since it is to the village that the villager looks to confirm his identity, it is to the village that the right belongs to know and pass judgement on what goes on in every individual's front yard. Nevertheless since in the case of a conflict of interests it is the family rather than the village which commands the villager's first loyalty and gives him his basic stability, it is only as far as the front yard that the curiosity of the community gains easy access. The house itself is more impregnable.  
(1974:13)

In fact the Greek word for family reveals the importance of the house in the life of the people: Oikogeneia is a group of people who originate from the same house; it is a compound word where "oikos" means house and "génos" - "géneia" refers to the whole family as belonging to the same blood/roots. Oikos is very closely linked with the identity of the family and it is the "chief stronghold" of the basic values of Cypriot society.

Nikita (1978) also argues that the Cypriots in general are oversensitive to the opinions of others about themselves and that they used the 'dichoron' (the main room with the stone arch) in the traditional house and the 'salotrapezaria' (the guest room) in the modern house to welcome the invited or uninvited visitor, the 'xenos'.

It may be an attempt on the part of the host to keep the xenos - the stranger - at a safe distance so that the host's privacy may be protected. A stranger - the actual translation of the word xenos in English - is a person who normally has limited understanding of his host's personality and life situation. Thus the 'salotrapezaria' - the guest room - has the symbolic function of preventing the 'xenos' at the early stages of the relationship of acquaintance from intruding into the private life of the host's family. (1978; 80; 81). (8)

As Du Boulay says:

From the moment of marriage and especially from the moment of the birth of the first child, the new family becomes firmly established as a separate entity even in the parental home and the

seeds of division lie unequivocally in the formation of this new group before any move has been made into a different establishment. (1974:19)

In Cyprus both in the rural and urban situations, building a new house or renting a small flat for the newly-weds is necessary in most cases. Before the 1960s there were couples who used to live with their parents, especially if the bride or groom was their youngest child. In these cases they offered the parental home as a dowry house. Dowry-Contract No. 1, dated 16.7.1930 in Appendix 7, is a handwritten original document which states clearly that the 5th present to the daughter (or item on the dowry) will be the parents' house which will only be given to the newly married couple,

"....if the father of the Groom G... will build on the nearby building site two rooms for me and my wife to stay there until we die."

Dowry contract no. 006877 of the 28.8.1955 also states that,

"....We (the parents of the bride to be) give our house on the condition that we will have the two small rooms while we are living"

(For more details about this issue, see Appendix 7: Dowry Contracts - Documents in translation and some originals.)



## 7.5 Marriage and the Family: Case Studies and discussion

I present my case studies and discussion in three parts. In the first of these I include three women's versions of their marriage in order to demonstrate the persistence of traditional beliefs and practices surrounding the institution. Appended to these is an illustration of the social significance of the marriage ceremony itself and the way it confers prestige on the families involved while the needs and wishes of the spouses themselves take second place (indeed are not considered at all). With these illustrations in mind I make certain points about the institution of marriage and the values and practices surrounding it and about the position of married women. For the second part I have selected one extended case-study of a rural woman; I present the life cycle of a 59 year old Horio woman illustrated with photographs from her family album. I allow the narrative to speak for itself because by now the reader should have no difficulty in recognizing its implications for my thesis. This woman's account of her father, mother and husband, of her childhood, marriage and domestic, productive and reproductive work, tell most eloquently what is by now a familiar story. Finally I turn to some examples of young Horio women's actual experience of patriarchal oppression.

These show how the fixing of women in patriarchal power relations is internalised and perpetuated by women themselves, both consciously and unconsciously revealing their sense of powerlessness. They also show how increasing contact between rural and urban communities and modernization, and concomitant sets of ideas and practices, produce conflict and contradiction, experienced directly by the young women of Horio who find any aspiration they may have beyond simply marriage and family opposed by traditional relations and beliefs. I would like to point out again that while the examples I give constitute a very small proportion of my empirical material they are highly representative. The universal application of the story they tell should be readily apparent.

As the family is the basic economic unit in Horio and women are confined to it, and defined by their position in it as wives and mothers, so the family and marriage are the basic institutions in their lives, and centrally implicated in the fixing and reproduction of traditional patterns.

It is by drawing out the traditional and static aspects of the rural society under study that I hope to show those metaphysical and social presuppositions on which the value system and actions stemming from it

can be explained. "Home life, attitudes and beliefs" and the participants' understanding of them, as well as their own views about femininity and masculinity have their bases in an inherited tradition of values concerning sex roles, honour and shame, good and evil. I have already asserted that these common-sense beliefs are woven into the social practices, and notably the economic patterns of people's day-to-day lives.

Before presenting further case studies with the intention of illustrating the way in which women's identities and positions are constituted and fixed in Horio, it would be useful to summarise some of the main points to bear in mind. All the following points have been made, explicitly or implicitly in the earlier parts of this chapter, in particular in the interviews already cited.

The family starts with marriage and is reconstituted and reproduced by it. Getting married is perceived as inevitable and no one in Horio contemplates a single life. This, it will be seen, is immediately more oppressive for women who cannot take an active role in seeking and selecting a spouse, and the more so since there is a relative shortage of men. The unenviable, alienated position of single women in general and

rural single women in particular is forcefully implied by the insistence in my case studies on the inevitability of marriage; this is illustrated at greater length in chapter 9. All the children of a family are therefore expected and required to marry: daughters first and sons after them, so that the latter can help economically towards preparing their sister's dowries. Girls are also expected to contribute to their sister's dowries by preparing the trousseau of the one that is to be married first.

The father has authority over all the members of his household; he represents them and takes decisions that concern their life. This involves both day-to-day activities and, as my examples show, major issues like education and choice of spouse. The simplest way to put it is that the traditional Horio family is a patriarchal one where the male enjoys total power. Interaction, I will argue, is still a matter of patriarchal relations.

Every newly-married couple aims to start life in a new household, the dowry house, as an autonomous unit of production and in some cases of consumption. The significance of the home as an autonomous base for production and reproduction has been emphasised in 7.4.

Marriage for Cypriots, as P. Loizos (1975 203 - 223) stresses, reflects prestige on the participating families, especially in the case where the member of the family under consideration marries up; marrying into a family from a higher class, with wealth and a good name is translated into producing social as well as economic capital. By this process money and prestige tend to reproduce each other through marriage.

The centrality of the family in the world of Horio shows us that, even for an educated person like a teacher, to be part of the village social system presupposes immersion into marital and familial relationships. That is, as a single person the teacher, like anyone else, will never really be accepted as part of the village community because s/he will have no direct access to the inter-familial network.

These trends are in common with the values of many other Mediterranean societies. (9)

#### Marriage procedures

- a) Marriage in the 1920s: Here is a 75 year old woman speaking about the ranking and 'points system' which in her case worked very well. A

poor orphan girl is of the lowest status. Only her honour is left to her and she must marry early to preserve it. Since she is of a low status, a widower is of course the only solution here. That is how she describes her marriage experience:

....I was an orphan and both my brothers were younger than me. An uncle looked after us for a few years and as soon as my husband, a rich middle-aged widower from a nearby village, asked for me he married me off at the age of fourteen. I knew nothing about marriage and I was very frightened of him. The day of the wedding was the first day I had seen him closely and for any length of time. He came with a mule and soon after the ceremony my relatives asked me to sit behind him, that is in the special modest women's way, not riding, and hold him tight around the waist. I was very shy about touching him and people were teasing me; some relatives, usually men, used crude language and laughed....

The first night he did what he wanted to do without saying a word. That was all. I remember asking the old mother of his first wife to come and sleep with me because I was scared. He had three children and two old women relatives of his first wife staying with us. The wife had died while giving birth and when I was pregnant at the age of fifteen I was scared that I would die too. But I have managed to survive until now! I had seven children, one after the other. My husband was very jealous. He wanted me to work in the fields but he couldn't stand it if other men looked at me. 'Are you asking somebody to add hands or legs to the child you are bearing' (I was always pregnant), he would say to me if anybody passed by our field where we were both working. (R15)

- b) Marriage in 1945: A 65 year old woman recalls her engagement and marriage experiences:

....My fiancé stayed in my father's house as sogambros and worked with him in the fields during our 3 years of engagement. He was a strong young man, a very hard worker, and my father liked him very much. We rarely stayed

together alone in one room for more than a few minutes. He was ashamed of what my father might think or say - and I was afraid of my father and very shy of my fiancé. My woman friend, who was my first cousin, a very clever lively girl, used to tease me and laugh at my behaviour but I just couldn't do differently.... I don't know what else to say really.... (R1).

- c) Marriage in 1969: A 34 year old professional woman recalls:

I am the first daughter of the family and as soon as my last year at the college was coming to an end, my parents told me of a few proposals they had already received for me. The first two were from men with extreme political views and my parents, even before telling me, found an excuse to say no. My father was very moderate in all his public behaviour especially in discussing politics. The third proposal was a surprise to them because it came from a person they respected very much from his professional position. All my family liked him and in five weeks time we had the engagement ceremony. My uncle was the match-maker. (R2)

- d) Marriage in 1971: A 32 year old woman married to a well known professional, being herself a successful young professional:

The decision was taken by him and his family to have a very big traditional wedding in his grandmother's old house.... I was not asked. He just stated to me 'I am the son of so and so and my belief in tradition and my father's wishes tell me what I must do. I want a traditional wedding with traditional music instruments. This answered my worries that it would be difficult to have that kind of wedding since we didn't have our own house and many relatives to help us. Everybody insisted that they wanted to make it a very big occasion. He was their first son, first child and their prestige would be damaged if they did not follow the tradition, although there were many other couples in the village who did not have a traditional wedding. Any suggestions for making the wedding-day enjoyable for the couple were not accepted. It had to be a show for the whole extended family. (R3)

These interviews reiterate the centrality of marriage in these women's lives and locate it as their inevitable destiny and indeed marriage was and still is the most important turning point in the life of young people. Men are still addressed as kopelia (lads) if they are bachelors, whatever their age, and are not taken as having full manhood before marriage. Responsible positions within the power hierarchy of their community are only offered to them after they have become a head of a household. As Margaret Kenna says with reference to Church men:

With the exception of the higher ranks of the Church in which monastic vows are a substitute for marriage, an adult unmarried person is socially regarded as less than a full adult; s/he is regarded as an incomplete individual having relationships only through her/his natal family. (1975:52)

### Choosing a spouse

The first step in the practices surrounding the institution of marriage is, of course the choice of spouse. What are the rules and who plays the active role in this game? Definitely not the prospective bride herself, as each of my examples show in this and the following chapter; and in the past, not the bridegroom either, although rural men are increasingly likely to take an active role on their own behalf.



The system of the arranged marriage and the dowry with which it is implicated still flourishes in Horio. What follows here is a brief outline of the rules that guide the choosing of a spouse and a discussion of the family prestige involved in the marriage celebration itself.

Many unwritten traditional rules are taken into consideration in choosing a spouse, and the first of these is the fame and respect of the other's family. Thus a girl of a high status (meaning a virgin whose name has not been in the mouths of gossipers, a healthy girl from a healthy family, a young girl and a wealthy girl) would expect to receive and accept a proposal from a man with a similar background and status. However, what might be called a four point system for assessing the woman in terms of reputation, health, wealth and age is not applied so particularly to men. It is not, as some traditionalist Cypriots like to think and argue, because women are so highly prized in Greek Cypriot society that such special concern for their condition is expressed. It is, as my whole thesis demonstrates, a function of the objectified, oppressed position women occupy in that society. To argue that their consideration as goods, as property, is due to the special esteem in which they are held is disingenuous and hypocritical, like

the corrolary notion that fathers and husbands are beneficent male-protectors. This frequently asserted argument betrays the sexual double standard which operates for men and women and has always been a feature of patriarchal power relations. I should add that the less detailed examination to which prospective grooms are subjected by the bride's family is also a function of the additional power that the relative shortage of men affords the former.

#### Respect and Good Name

If a girl has broken her engagement, her reputation and status is damaged and in a second proposal, if she is lucky to have one, she will have to accept a husband with a lower status, since she is seen as somebody who has a past. A widow has very few chances to get married again and a divorced woman even fewer; she, in fact, finds herself in the worst possible situation because even if the divorce was granted with the husband as the guilty party, she is implicitly considered responsible for the man's wrong behaviour.

Premarital sexual or non-sexual relationships and friendly encounters with men unrelated to her family are condemned and have effects on her possibilities for marriage and therefore on her entire life. This

first point to be checked in a prospective bride is implicit in each of my examples. (Cf: 'The special modest women's way'; 'I knew nothing about marriage'; 'We rarely stayed alone in one room for more than a few minutes'; 'I didn't touch him until I got married'; etc). It is also apparent in the family opposition to the 15 year old girl's wishes in the final section of this chapter.

### Wealth

Cypriot men and women, if asked openly how important a qualification wealth would be for a prospective bride, would either insist it is irrelevant or concede it has some very minor importance. Their declared position will be determined by their wish to avoid appearing what is commonly called a 'dowry hunter'; the same, of course, applies to their families when they seek a bride on their behalf. In principle, a man who has a marriage proposal conveyed to a girl cannot allow it to be thought that he is driven by any pecuniary consideration, but on the contrary will wish it to be thought that such considerations do not affect him. However, it is common knowledge in Cyprus that prospective grooms and their families - the exceptions to the rule are very few indeed - are greatly interested in the question of the wealth of

prospective brides and, other things being equal, would always choose the girl with the biggest dowry. None of my earlier examples, for different reasons, illustrates this point (though, of course, they do not contradict it); it remains implicit, so I am providing here another extract from an interview with a 34 year old woman who said:

I was nineteen when the first proposal for me came. It was just after my older sister's marriage, but my family could not afford to build another house at the time so that they found an excuse that I was too young and answered 'no' to the go-between. Then four years went by and there were no proposals when in the end one man from the nearby village sent his proposal. But the first thing that he asked was if my father could build a house for us in the town. That was very expensive at the time because we did not even have land there. My father wanted that man because he was a skilled worker and had his job but could not afford the expensive house. Then I had more proposals for marrying out of the village but again they wanted money. Father decided on my present husband who asked for a house in the village. It was cheaper in the village and all the family helped me to build it. (R28).

## Health

This is always an important factor because marriage and procreation are strongly linked together and the main concern of the parents from both families of origin, as well as of the two spouses, is to have healthy offspring who will continue the family's line and maintain its good reputation.

As a 41 year old woman, now mother of two, said:

I was the third daughter and I had to wait for my elder sisters to get married before my parents were to consider a proposal for me. I was doing a lot of lacemaking both for my sisters' dowries and for the travelling vendor who paid us per piece. My eyesight failed me a bit, from this very delicate work, and my parents took me to the optician after a lot of discussion about the disadvantages that having glasses would have on my future chances for marriage. I did not want to have glasses but I could not really work well. So we decided to get the glasses from the doctor and then use them only at home so that the other villagers would not notice it. An old woman brought a proposal from a young co-villager whom my father wanted very much as a son-in-law because he was a very good farmer. But somebody told him that I was old and that I was wearing glasses... (R4).

#### Age

Generally speaking Cypriot men prefer their wives to be between one and seven years younger than they are. This is one of the reasons parents prefer to marry off their daughters young. This may be as soon as they are physically mature and have attained the age of majority, which is when the Church allows marriage to take place. This is evident, especially, in example (a) (marriage in the 1920s) above, where an orphan girl being of the lowest status in terms of wealth, by being married ensures her honour in addition to youth

and health, (her three strong points). A 34 year old woman of Horio, mother of three, recalls:

When the proposal came, somebody, an auntie I think, mentioned that he (the future fiancé) was ten years older than me. His appearance was very young. I did not mind about his age. I liked the fact that he was a mature person and that I could rely on his knowledge and the right decisions he could take for our life. The first time that I felt bad about him being much older than me was when other people commented on his age. I heard that one of the Church rules prohibits marriages with a ten year age difference between the spouses and that it grants property for financial securities to the younger. In our case, I did not notice anything. (R2)

The point system works with persistence in every detail for the bride. The collective of the bride, that is, her nuclear and extended family, when considering a proposal, gathers information about the personal and family history of the prospective groom, and about the prestige and wealth that his family enjoys, and insists on having a good look at the groom himself, to be sure about his external appearance. In previous years this close 'examination' of his external appearance had the intention of checking his physical ability to work the lands and, by implication, to produce children. Example (c) (marriage in 1969) above provides a clear illustration

of the kind of checking which occurs now, demonstrating political and professional considerations.

The strength of love and loyalty is generated within the family and is not a necessary prerequisite for a marriage to take place, as Horiates strongly believe. It is expected to occur once engagement has taken place.

A 'dokimasia' (engagement) which involves a trial period of one to three or even four years precedes marriage and is usually sanctioned by a Church ceremony and blessings from the priest. In the case of many of the women studied at Horio prolonged engagement was inevitable because of financial problems faced by the bride's parents in building the dowry house. In former times this created much frustration for the couple as moral obligations towards their parents and practical problems of privacy did not allow them to have sexual intercourse before marriage (example (b) - marriage in 1945 above). Contraceptives were not widely known and abortion was considered a criminal offence by both civil law and the ecclesiastical law. As discussed in

chapter 4, dowry contracts show, in particular documents nos.9 and 13, how special consideration was given to this problem.

In case it becomes necessary for the wedding to be hastened owing to lack of self-control on the part of the groom, then the ceremony will take place without the parents of the bride being obliged to prepare the agreed trousseau and dowry completely but only as far as their financial condition allows it. [Dowry contract no. 9].

The second document includes in its 'Special Agreements' the following:

In case it becomes necessary for the wedding to be hastened owing to lack of self-control on the part of the groom then the ceremony will take place and the agreed dowry and money will be given later at an agreed date. (Dowry Contract no.13)

These documents provide evidence that such problems had arisen in the village and had had long lasting effects on the relationships between the two families of origin and the newly married couple. In order to avoid the recurrence of such a scandal the church representative and the parents of the girl would thus write down special agreements which could force the bridegroom to marry the pregnant bride even if there was not enough time to prepare the whole of the agreed dowry.



Since marriage is the most important thing in the Greek Cypriot woman's life the case studies necessarily focussed on women's experience of it. Of the 94 interviewed Horio women 68 are between the ages of 20 and 60, and married, while 8 are widowed - 7 of them over 55. These widows have been included in order to help the reader gain an insight into the specific problems that they faced when their husbands died (two of them were young when he died and had to struggle to bring up their orphaned children). These widowed rural women provide first-hand information about their lives as young women during the dark periods of the 1920's - 1940's when record-keeping about women did not exist, (literacy among women being so scarce). By digging deep into their past this group of women brought to light memories about their relationships with their own husbands and parents, and the ideas they internalised about marriage itself. Their reminiscences tell us (and the narrative of the extended case study below emphasises this) that however extensive the material changes which may have taken place over the past sixty years, sexual power relations have remained substantially unchanged.

For women marriage was and still is of greater importance than for men, (though it is also important for men), for the acquisition of womanhood, for

reaching full adult status. The unmarried rural woman has no role to play within the mainstream of society and has to spend her whole life at the social and cultural periphery of her closed community. She is negatively defined as one who 'failed' to get married. Such failure colours the whole of the rest of her life (in spite of the fact that everyone knows she could never have taken an active role in asking somebody to marry her: see chapter 9 below section on single women).

Since the whole of Cypriot society sees marriage as a necessary natural and social institution, being the foundation of the family and the domestic group, the only proper function and positive definition available for a woman is through becoming a wife and mother which is the identity the Greek Cypriot woman internalizes. As Nikita says:

Marriage continues still to be the primary objective of every girl and the first care of her family (Nikita 1975:14)

We have seen how family reputation and prestige are major determining factors in arranging marriages with little attention paid to the particular wishes and needs of the couple themselves, in particular the woman. Example (d) above (marriage in 1971) illustrates this well; the groom insists on obeying

the wishes of his father and following tradition, implicitly asserting his own authority in relation to his fiancée in this institution of the traditional marriage. For the first child (which he was) this has special importance. The following description of the Horio marriage of R40 emphasises the way in which the marriage celebration itself is used to gain prestige and power:

M. is the first daughter of the Mouchtar (the president of the village committee). She had a glamorous wedding. Everybody remembers it. Her father asked a person from the town to be their marriage sponsor; he was a political figure with many acquaintances. People were impressed by his appearance at the wedding. The newly-married couple had the means of getting favours, the patronage system was flourishing in Cyprus at that time. (R10 describing the marriage of R40)

Another Horiatisa (R17 aged 47) commented on another glamorous marriage in terms of the number of people with status that it attracted. In this case a good search for the best possible wedding sponsor was undertaken by the two fathers-in-law and the groom himself. They managed at last to find a distant relative, a government Minister with a very good name, and their whole family was delighted. Besides attracting a lot of sophisticated city folk to the wedding they also gained political power and secure jobs in the government.

Sufferings in rural women's lives

I have dragged my way through life suffering torment and sorrow and it is little the comfort that I know during the whole of my days (10).

I read these words by Peig Sayer, the Irish writer of 'An Old Woman's reflections' in 1979, and although I was by then prepared for surprises I was amazed to find similar experiences and words in the mouths of my rural participants.

One woman (R52), mentioned earlier described how guilty she felt at dragging her daughter out to work before she was even an adolescent, commenting that at least she was not in moral danger as adolescent girls who work in the fields are popularly supposed to be. She felt guilty and subscribed to a popular myth to comfort herself (part of the oppressive system whereby women are held to be at continual moral risk and therefore in need of continual 'protection'/policing) and on the other hand felt sorry because her child was young, delicate and had been worn out by work that was too heavy for her. Her internalisation of sex roles and unquestioning acceptance of patriarchal authority are typical.

This 69 year old woman recalls:

My husband was a shepherd for the whole of his life. He didn't know and did not want to do anything else. We had seven children and no land besides the 'frachtn', (a piece of land attached to their house). With no property of our own to work on, me and my oldest daughter had to work in other people's fields all the year round for some extra money.

When I asked her about the money and the payment she and her daughter were getting she said:

....Yes, our wage was very low. All the male workers during harvest for example, got much more than us, double if I remember well...We had to work whatever kind of work and money were available; we (needed to) help for the bread of the family, to feed seven children, mother and mother-in-law, my husband and myself '10 mouths in all' was not an easy job...(R52)

I now want to illustrate, by way of an extended case study, the individual life-cycle of a 60-year old Horiatissa, a typical peasant woman. I allow her own account of her life to speak for itself: it outlines what might be described as the typical 'life' of a rural woman in Cyprus.

What her narrative does is to reinforce the points I have been drawing out and suggest the continuity of the traditional family model with the autocratic father-figure at the centre. Her identity and position as a woman is largely internalised but, as in most cases, not completely.

R1, our main informant here, was born in September 1920 as the fourth child, and the first daughter after three much older sons, to a poor peasant couple. The 1920s, the years of her early childhood, were especially difficult in Horio. Most households were in debt either to the monastery or the local money lender. N. Surridge (1930:25) and P.Sant Cassia (1981:54) give substantial evidence of and the reasons for such widely spread peasant debt in Cyprus. Horio could not stay unaffected by the more general economic and social conditions, and the household into which our informant was born was itself severely affected. Hardship and discontent were constant features of a Greek Cypriot woman's life in those days, deriving mainly from the power of the patriarchal forces which kept women in submission and personal enslavement. What R1 said about her mother (reiterated, for example, in the details of the life of R12, a 58 year-old woman, R21, a 52 year-old and R36, 57 year-old) shows life for mothers and for young girls to have been continuous suffering. R1 opened her eyes to the world in a household and a community where the dominance of the male was indisputable, and where wife-beating was a constant phenomenon.

My participant's story begins, as I have said, in the 1920s. However, the dark ages of which she speaks

are, as I have been arguing, by no means past. (Not even the phenomenon of wife-beating as many interviews testified and as I illustrate in chapter 9). Women continue to suffer the consequences of patriarchal oppression and it is the continuity of the traditional family model with the autocratic father figure at its centre which my interviews, taken as a whole describe. Like R1, Horiatises continue to internalise their identity as women and their position in the family and community as these are supplied by patriarchal common sense. R1 searched through her memories and the shoe box where she keeps her family photographs (several of which make up part of the narrative reproduced here). She recounted events that impressed her, recorded with 'black ink' in her memory. Here, without further comment is her story.

Popular memories, family albums (R1):

My father was a short thin man with a strong will. He was very strict with all the members of his family. He really was a tough little nut. I was afraid of him...

My first memories of my childhood go back to the age of five when I was present during a quarrel between my father and his eldest son, George, who dared to

question my father's cruel treatment of mother. My father had been beating her for daring to sell eggs from her hens to the travelling vendor. My brother left the next morning and didn't come back for a long long time, almost until our mother died. That was when I sent a message to him that mother was seriously ill.

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A photograph taken at Horio: 17.7.1928 at the festival of St. Marina - Discussed with and offered to this researcher in August 1979 by the informant, who is the girl on the left.

Mother died soon after his visit; I was only a teenager then. She had such a hard life. My father was never kind to her. Even during her illness he used to complain and grumble that she was not helping



him at the fields enough. After her death I had to wear black from head to foot, winter and summer, for some years until I got engaged.

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1939 at Horio.  
"The travelling  
photographer  
took this  
picture a few  
months after  
Mother's  
death. We sent  
it to England  
to my brother  
who was already  
married there."

Engagement and Marriage Procedures

Since I was the only daughter, after three boys, a single daughter, I was supposed to be in a privileged position. My father wanted to find a 'good' husband according to his standards. I was 22 and supposed to have grown old when he decided to consider the proposal by this person, my present husband. My father asked many people from the village of the proposed groom which was nearby, about the young man's behaviour, willingness to work, his relationship with his widowed mother and his sisters, whom he had married off by that time. Then my father took the decision and proceeded with the engagement.

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October 1945.  
"We got married  
in the  
village. We  
had to go to  
the town to  
have this  
photograph  
taken."

The agreement was that my fiancé was going to stay in my father's house in a separate room and that his house was to be given to us on marriage. A new room with mudbricks was to be added upstairs, which my fiancé and his friends built. He became a 'sogambros'. (11) It took him a little while to build a small new room, working only whenever father did not need him for farming.

We got married after three years and had our first child, a daughter, in the first year after marriage, exactly twelve months after the ceremony. Five more children followed - three girls and two boys with about eighteen months to two-years gaps between them.

We have been married for forty-one years now. When I got married I knew nothing about sex (or what you call things, she added in a shy voice). What is contraception? [She asked me and I explained what methods most women all over the world use today to plan a family only if and when they want it without avoiding sex; she seemed very sceptical and silent for some time. To me it seemed as if she was reconsidering her life in the light of this new knowledge that came to her so late in her life. Such knowledge did not offer her any relief from the plight of giving birth and raising 6 children one after the other. She added after a long pause.] I knew nothing. I did whatever my husband told me. You modern women of today are very lucky. You are really lucky. I am glad for you and my daughters and grand-daughters. In my family I was surrounded always by men; my father, my three brothers, my uncles, my husband, his two brothers... I had very little help and advice from older women. My mother died when I was so young.

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The first family photograph of our participant R1. May 1951 with three daughters her husband and her father. She is seven months pregnant with the fourth child. She was praying for a son this time...And her prayers were heard.

"My father and my husband were so disappointed when I gave birth to the third child and she was 'a girl again'. I must say though that my husband loved all the girls afterwards as much as he loved the two boys. He worked hard to educate them. He was always much better on this issue, compared with some other husbands in the village who left their wives and went either to Nicosia for days or grumbled for months and years about their wives giving them daughters and not enough or more sons; they grumbled and grumbled as if it was the woman's wrong decision and her own fault. [At various points during the interview she commented on her relationship with her father.]

My father lived with us permanently and usually helped my husband in the fields. He had always been a very quick and hard worker himself and expected everybody to be like him. He really used to boss my husband around, as he always did me until the day he died. When my husband, who I must say showed a lot of patience, was angry with my father, he used to complain to me instead of telling him straight what he felt. In fact, I had both of them on at me, demanding my services and complaining about each other!

My father had a long life. He continued to work up to the age of 81 until the last week before he died. Even in his last days he remained a very strong willed person. I was afraid of him as 'sheep are afraid of the approaching eagle'. I had my own home, my own husband and six children and still had to take orders from him! Even now when I think of doing something I tend to consider if he would like it, if he will be angry with me in that world of the dead people where he is now.

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December 1965.  
A few days  
before he died.

My mother-in-law stayed with us too when she had married off all her children. She had her good and bad moments, but we never quarelled; I never challenged her beliefs. I named my second daughter after her and she was the first to appear on the scene during this daughter's wedding .

### 7.6 Women against Women

In this concluding section of my Horio case studies and of chapter 7 I take a brief look at the ways in which women's internalisation of their sex roles as constituted by given, patriarchal values and practices, positively contributes to the reproduction of their own oppression through existing power relations. Women's own participation in the patriarchal status quo and the continuing force of patriarchal ideology as pressure to conform is illustrated by the following poignant contrast between the perspectives of a grandmother and a granddaughter, 75 and 15 years old respectively.

The grandmother (whose mother died while giving birth to her fourth child, a large boy, when she was only 7) remembers 'no childhood'.

I was the first born and at the age of 9 years old was responsible for all the family. When we came from my mother's funeral (who died a few days after giving birth to the 4th child) I remember my aunty advising me how to look after the baby. She had to go back to her village to look after her family and she was hoping that the neighbours would help me to bring up the baby safely. The baby died a few weeks after that; I only remember that once I put too many blankets over him so he would not be cold, and only for a little, while I ran out in the yard to see the other children and play with them. The baby died soon after that and I had it on my conscience all my life because I had neglected him. When I tell my granddaughters about myself they do not believe me; things have changed. They have an easy life and they want everything today. Young girls want all the freedom in the world now. They do not keep their position as women...Yes I quarrel with them and ask their father to be

strict with them. Girls today have lost their shame. God will punish us. Look what happened to Cyprus with the war. (R21).

No doubt various factors contribute to this point of view and the old woman's (understandable) selfish investment in believing in the values that have made her life such a miserable one must be among them. After all it would be difficult for her to accept that her granddaughter might enjoy autonomy and self-fulfilment in a way she never could. However, it is most important to recognise how firmly the grandmother's own identity and values have been fixed. She takes for granted the set of ideas and practices which resulted in her own oppression. Existing power relations and values are the way things are and common sense insists that is the way things should be.

On the other hand, her 15 year-old granddaughter tries desperately to gain some independence from the four adults - not just her grandmother, of course - who 'advise' her all day long, how to speak and how to behave, because she is old enough now to be looked at by other Horiates, men and women, as a future bride or daughter-in-law. Her reputation, therefore, is at stake:

'Be modest', grandma shouts, 'don't put that skirt on again. Don't provoke the next-door



neighbours. All the boys will be looking at you... And my mother follows on her lines: 'You don't need to stay in the town after school. You don't need the library. Your father will explain to the teacher. You must come home on the first bus. What will the Horiates say if they see you coming back in the evening on the second bus? "What has she been doing in Nicosia?" Something is happening. I am a mother and I know better than you.'

And my father and older brother join in the chorus to remind me in a few words and with very severe stern faces that I am a young woman and my behaviour must be appropriate not to shame the name of the family because once the gossipers start on me, and my name is in their mouths, the evil against me and my family has been done. (R4)

After a desperate look and sigh this young woman continued.

It is as if my family reminds me day after day that: We did you a favour to send you to the Secondary school but if you don't behave according to our family rules you will have a very big problem to face. No matter how good a student you are you'll have to stop immediately, if you give the chance to anybody to comment on your behaviour. I'm frustrated all the time because I really want to join the school choir and the library workshop. Both teachers, the music one and the Greek literature one, are angry with me because they know I have the abilities to join their groups. They tell me, 'Try and persuade your father...' They should know how difficult such a job is. (R4)

The conflict between the traditional way of oppression and the new educational opportunities and autonomy of choice for women is clearly illustrated. The contradictions this produces for Greek Cypriot women are examined in more detail in the next chapter where we see how the persistence of fixed ideas and

practices make simple, individual resistance to oppression problematic and painful. Ultimately, even in Poli, the pressures to conform with existing power relations and reproduce them through traditional marriage are still powerful. In Horio, where modernisation and 'western' ideas have had an as yet less powerful impact, the balance of power is squarely with the status quo.

A second illustration of this, which highlights the economic implications of this old-new conflict is provided by a conversation I had with R6 about her daughter's future. The girl, R9 was in the kitchen preparing dinner and the men of the household were at the coffee shop waiting for their dinner time. The mother was explaining why they did not send the girl to secondary school. The reasons given were that 'whatever happens, i.e. educated or not,' a girl needs a dowry and her parents could not provide everything for her, i.e. a dowry house of £7,000 minimum and education - another £3-6,000. She would therefore have to miss education for the sake of a good dowry. The young woman suddenly came in to ask something about the cooking and caught us talking about her. She immediately joined in the discussion and expressed strong complaints about her mother not supporting her at all when she most needed that support. She

recalled that she was 12 years old and in the last month of her primary schooling.

Her future life was the main subject of discussion in the family. The final decision was that she should not follow secondary education for which they had to pay fees, bus fares, uniforms, books, etc. at that time. The mother had to explain the pressures on her from the father. An interesting dialogue between mother and daughter revealed to me the dilemma in which the mother was caught and her final conscious submission to patriarchal authority, (what can I do?) although she guessed that the loser, in the long term, was her own daughter. As a woman she acted against another woman's long term interests, submitting herself to patriarchal ideology and at the same time showing that she was aware of all these processes, frustrated and incapable of doing anything to change the situation.

It is with these illustrations of the complex inter-play between women's growing consciousness of their oppression, desire for autonomy and opportunity and at the same time their wish to retain an accepted function and definition within their community, that is within existing power relations, with these illustrations of the persistence of the traditional set of patriarchal ideas and social practices, that I leave my case study of the women of Horio.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 7

1. Leonard D. 1980, in her description of the fieldwork, speaks about the value of knowing the people one is interviewing so that the gap between what people say and what their realities of life are is narrowed.
2. Monica Wilson as quoted in Leonard D. (1980)
3. According to the Department of land and surveys, (see map in Appendix 7 ), 6,000 donums of land around Horio were owned by Horiates. The rest belonged to the government , to individual owners from other villages or towns, to the Archbishopric of Nicosia, to the Church of St. Marina and to the Turkish religious organization EFKAF.
4. EFKAF owns land, olive trees and other property donated to it by Muslim and Orthodox believers all over Cyprus. Horio was a mixed Turkish - Greek village until 1957 and EFKAF still owns property in Horio.
5. 'Campanilismo' is the term used by J. Davis in his 'Land and family in Pisticci' 1974, alluding to the fact that the village bell towers in most Italian villages, as in most Cypriot ones, are the point of reference of the village.
6. Sant Cassia speaks in his PhD 'Patterns of politics and Kinship in a Greek Cypriot village' about his villagers values and describes the way in which these common values offer villagers a strong sense of belonging to a particular group.
7. The 'dichoron' as described by Nikita (1978), and as recorded during my fieldwork, is used for all family discussions and interactions that need privacy and confidentiality.
8. The concept of 'xenos' is a complex and crucial term in Greek family and social life. This has been already discussed by anthropologists and sociologists who have researched into the various Greek communities of Greece, Cyprus and the Greek diaspora, and whose works have been mentioned in various parts of this thesis. The xenos as stranger, the unrelated and probably suspect or enemy to the family's interests should be kept at a 'distance'. The xenos as the visitor has to be welcomed in the family's best room and offered the best food and best room and, of course, be presented with the best possible conditions, even if the family is experiencing difficulties.
9. The values of other Mediterranean societies are in line with those of Cyprus today.

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CHAPTER 8: URBAN WOMEN

- 8.1 Introduction: Poli - The General Context
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  - (i) Experiences of Poli women
  - (ii) Female sexuality
  - (iii) Women versus women: The divide and rule principle
- 8.5 Urban Women, Education and Paid Work
- 8.6 Urban Women, Politics and Social Life
- 8.7 Conclusion: Urban life for Greek Cypriot women.

## CHAPTER 8: URBAN WOMEN

### 8.1 Introduction: Poli - The General Context

This chapter is complementary to Chapter 7 and deals with the personal and the daily experiences of ninety eight Greek Cypriot women who live in Poli, the urban setting chosen for this part of my fieldwork. After providing some general background information about Poli I go on to discuss the urbanisation process and population changes which constitute its recent history, criticising the simple dichotomies of rural-urban, traditional-modern. My own findings are then discussed.

The women interviewed in Poli all spoke about their own experiences from childhood through to adulthood and the ways in which their specific upbringing affected their orientations towards married life and motherhood. Some of them questioned the assumptions which were taken for granted by rural women, in particular those relating to marriage and the freedom to choose their spouses. But the extent of this choice is strictly limited; they do not, on the whole, feel at all free to choose whether or not to marry, when to marry, what kind of man to marry or what kind of relations to have with him.

It has been argued that in a developing society a process of economic, demographic and geographical change always takes place. In the case of Cyprus, this change affected the pre-existing institutions of the society, family and kinship included. Tradition and modernity co-exist or conflict with each other in the familial as well as in other situations.

The aim of my study in an urban context was to find out how much the influence of traditional values concerning sex roles has affected urban women's lives; and since it emerged from my work with rural women that the underlying ideologies and division of labour obstinately persisted, these questions were given prominence in the interviews.

The interviews of and participant observations among urban women were completed by the end of 1980. Chapter 6 and appendix 8.1 give details about the sample and interviews. The women studied included married women with and without children, single, separated and divorced women. Some of my case studies in Poli, as in Horio, were refugees. This chapter deals with general issues relating to urban women and, like Chapter 7, focuses upon and quotes mainly married (and, in a less detailed way, single) women on the

issues of education, social condition, expectations from marriage and so on. The other categories of women, those without men who are labelled problem women, are largely discussed in Chapter 9, where my interviewees are both Urban and Rural.

In this chapter, as in the previous one issues of marriage and family life are central, although other issues are looked into in more detail, such as Cypriot women and paid work and their involvement or non-involvement in public life. In the urban setting, transport facilities, distances and availability of different jobs give more opportunities to women for paid work and organisation in unions, political parties and groups (see Chapter 5, Section 5.5 above).

As I argued in earlier chapters, sociological and anthropological literature often equates 'rural' with 'traditional values', conservatism or stability, while 'urban' is equated with 'modern' values, progressivism or change. If those assertions were true in any simple sense then the data gathered in Poli should present a quite different and very promising picture of the life of urban Greek Cypriot women as compared with that of rural women. But in fact, as I and others have found (Ebeid 1982), tradition and

modernity exist in urban life in a conflicting relationship. The 'ideal' representations continue to have effects although they may have been modified since some change has been achieved at some levels, for example women and work. We will see that the kind of contradictions suggested in the last part of Chapter 7 are experienced much more generally and more consciously by urban women and that, in many ways, existing power relations are reproduced as forcefully as ever if their processes are more subtle.

The oppressive and backward Ottoman administration of Cyprus between 1571 and 1878, (see chapter 2 above) resulted in the very slow development of the towns and of a distinctive urban class and culture. Until the British presence on the island, Poli was characterised by the traditional city structure. City walls enclosed the religious, administrative and commercial buildings as well as the homes of the wealthier families. Immediately outside the walls in the nearby villages lived the poorer families involved with agriculture, who supplied Polites, the inhabitants of Poli, with agricultural products for everyday consumption. One architectural characteristic of this walled, densely populated city which expressed its needs for privacy and confinement, is the building of

houses with enclosed yards, high walls and only one exit to the street. These were microcosms of the city which enclosed them, isolating the private world of the family, i.e. women, from the public world of men and so protecting and imprisoning the women themselves.

Poli, that is Nicosia, has been studied extensively by Attalides (1981) and much of the background information given below is based on his work. Although he describes the process of social change and urbanisation before 1974, processes necessarily radically altered today, I would still like to use some of his analysis and conclusions, since in the course of my fieldwork I have found that many of the social mechanisms he identified and analysed for the pre-invasion era operate today in altered circumstances.

For the purposes of this research Poli has been chosen as the main urban setting for observation and data collection, first of all because it is one of the towns that were seriously affected by the 1974 war; that is, of the towns not completely occupied by the invading forces but divided in two 'sectors' by the 'green line'. Secondly it has become the employment and economic centre of the part of the island still

occupied by the Greek-Cypriots. The government has built new refugee housing estates very near it so that a great number of refugees resettled here. Some of them moved into Poli itself, many receiving some material and other kinds of assistance from relatives, friends and acquaintances in locating a job and reasonable accommodation long before the government organised official aid. Thirdly, as others have already argued (1), Poli is a 'typical' example in the international context of an industrially developing city undergoing rapid urbanisation, though it is quite unique in Cyprus itself, being by far the largest town with very few intermediate size towns remaining in Greek Cypriot hands after the invasion. As Map 8.1 shows the 'Green-line' of occupation runs through the centre of Poli dividing it into Turkish and Greek sectors.

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### Map 8.1. Poli and the Green Line (1980)

In Chapter 2 I described how, since 1963, political intercommunal conflict has left its marks on the topography of Poli, creating, for the first time in the island's history quarters or sectors, for the two



communities. The 1974 events have enlarged the Turkish quarter considerably. As Attalides observes:

Poli is now virtually a surrounded city. One half of the outer ring villages are under Turkish military occupation, their inhabitants evicted from their homes. The same applies to parts of the engulfed villages in the northern, eastern and western area of the town itself. Of the four main radial roads leading out of the town and linking it to the rest of Cyprus only one, that leading to the south, is now open. (Attalides 1981: vii).

A number of my urban participants come from rural areas and have either migrated to Poli as a result of urbanisation or were forced to leave their rural homes because of the 1974.

In 1960 the total population of the five other towns of Cyprus was only a little more than the total of the city under study.

Map 8.2 The major towns in the 5 regions of Cyprus and their estimated population before the events of 1974.

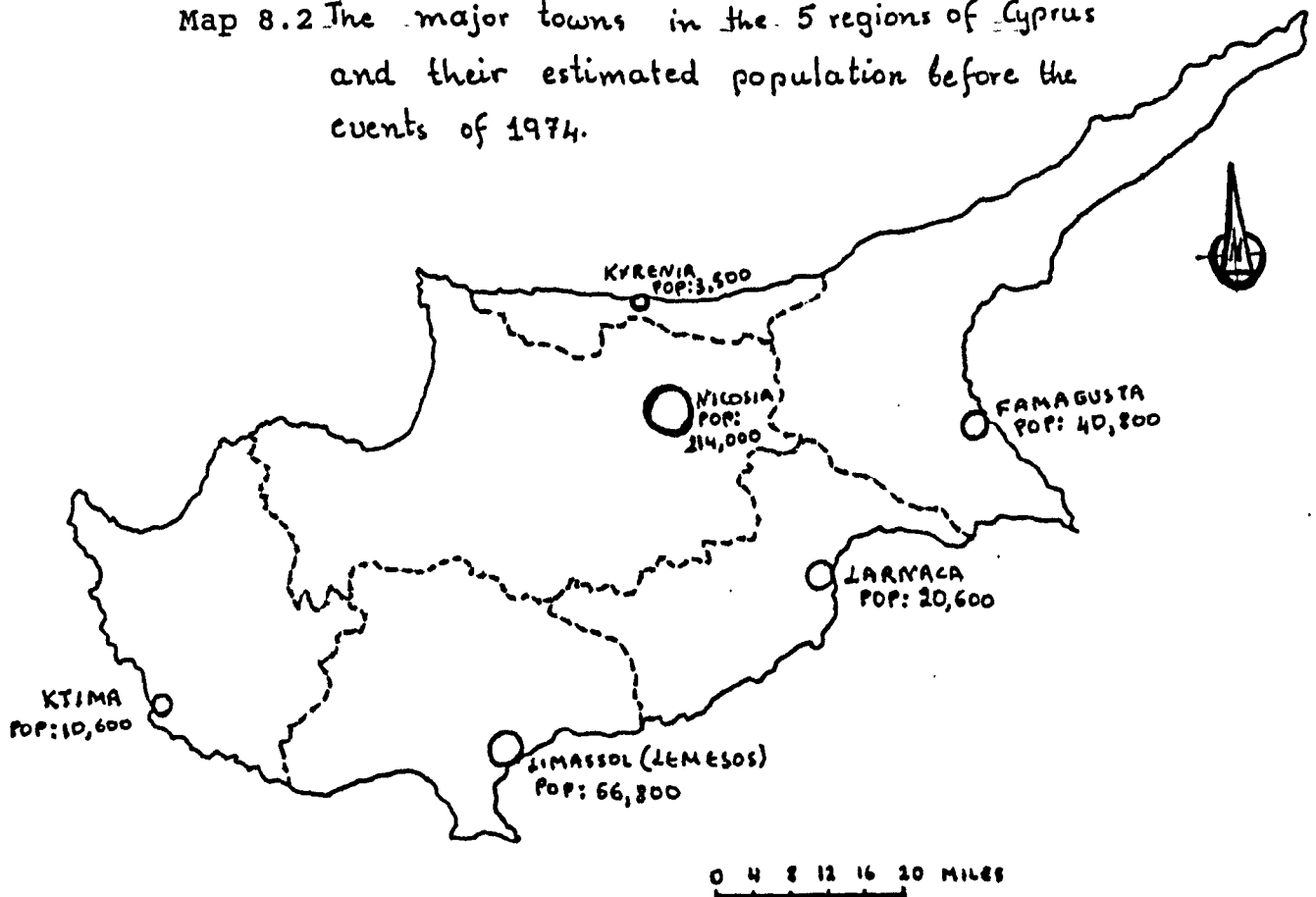


Table 8.1

Population figures of all major towns of Cyprus.  
Department of Town Planning and Housing, 1970.

(a) Population of POLI 1881 - 1970	(b) Population of POLI and the other towns	
	1881	1960
1881 : 15,000	Nicosia-POLI 15,000	96,000
1901 : 21,000	Lemesos 6,000	43,500
1921 : 27,000	Famagusta 2,500	34,500
1946 : 54,000	Larnaca 8,000	20,000
1960 : 96,000	Paphos 2,000	9,000
1970 : 10,000 (estimate)	Kyrenia 1,000	3,500
<u>Sources:</u> 1881-1960 Censuses 1970-Dem. Report.	<u>Sources:</u> Censuses of 1881 & 1960	

Apart from gradually becoming the clear economic centre, Poli, as the administrative capital, has concentrated within it the headquarters of all government departments whose number and size have been steadily increasing. More than half of all government employees in Cyprus work in Poli. Also, more than a third of all Greek Cypriot workers in retail trades are employed there though its resident population is only one fifth of the Island's total. There is one retail shop for every thirty-six residents. There is also a large wholesaling sector there which deals with the distribution of products from the rural areas. Poli is also the educational centre of Cyprus since forty percent of all secondary pupils on the island go to a school in the capital; we have already seen the consequences this bridge across the urban-rural divide can have in terms of the conflict between traditional, assumed beliefs and social practices and the wishes and needs produced by education (7.5 above). Moreover, most of the specialised and higher education institutions are located there. As table 8.2 below shows, the governmental services, institutions of higher education, places of entertainment, commercial establishments and the largest industrial base are centred in Poli which even at the time of a 1973 survey was the location for one fifth of all jobs in Cyprus.

Table 8.2

Percentage of total Cyprus employment in each  
sector concentrated in Poli in 1967.

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## 8.2 The Traditional-Modern Continuum

The social and economic life of the urban situation under study has been seriously affected by the dramatic events of the invasion. Although detailed discussions of how Poli functions today economically

and socially would help the reader and, in particular, contribute towards a general understanding of the effects of the 1974 war on development and the social world in urban Cyprus, it was beyond the scope of this research to conduct a social survey of such depth in Poli in 1980. (For details on this issue see House, ILO 1981). Of course, a more general context is provided in Part II and Chapter 5 above, but I will set out some pertinent points here.

Since seventy percent of the pre 1974 economic resources of the island were left in the hands of the occupation forces, there was a major governmental campaign soon after the invasion to reactivate the economy in the south. Poli had its share of industrial reconstruction and the occupational composition in both social and economic terms was altered in the town.

It is important to note that as late as November 1979 the rapid change in the demography of the town was continuing ,with part of the refugee population still unsettled and searching for better housing and jobs. The total population of Poli was not known, but it was continuously affected by and effecting in turn the industrial structure. As Kahl (1959:54 quoted in Attalides) argues, urbanisation , industrialisation

and economic development are parts of the same process. All the factors I have mentioned, including the destructiveness of war, provided the context for Poli's rapid development.

A new category of residents of Poli was developing: the Neopolites (ie. the new inhabitants of Poli from either rural or urban origin but refugees) (2). The transition from rural property owner to urban propertyless, was painful for most of these 'Neopolites'. They were people caught uneasily in the rural-urban, traditional-modern continuum not at either of the two extremes because in the case of Poli new settlers became permanent although with rural links in most cases. A different and more complex division of labour is created and family resources are organised differently: more women find paid work.

A high proportion of Poli's population today are propertyless refugees. Property is generally very important for Greek Cypriots and has always played an important role in the life-cycle of the family both in the rural and in the urban settings; in the previous chapter we saw how property is woven into the set of ideas and practices of marriage and the family and how women are themselves positioned as property, defined by their dowries, in particular their dowry-house.

For urban families especially, a piece of land, 'concrete property', in the village of the parents' origin was crucial for setting the 'parameters for family patterns' (3) and for contributing to the adaptation of older members of the family when urbanisation took place. As Horio is drawn out into Poli by education and work so Poli is drawn back into Horio by the traditional defining pattern of social relations.

By becoming refugees and propertyless now, so abruptly, most Polites refugees, women and men, lost their 'sense of measure': that critical reference point for making sense of the world and their position in it. Their modes of relating and their social patterns including class and family structure were disrupted and confused but not transformed. As discussed elsewhere, both Horiates and Polites prefer to lower the current consumption of their families in order to be able to buy or build a house, if they have not been given one, for themselves and their offspring. The Cypriot's need for property signifies more than a desire for the status conferred by home-ownership, although that kind of prestige is actually valued. It is a fact that there is no extensive rentier class since only twelve per cent of property is actually rented. On the whole therefore,

people have to have their own property in which they must live with their family. Finally, linking into its function as a source of meaning and focal point, the desire for property also relates to the fact that a house provides a small holding to grow flowers and vegetables in the towns or even to keep chickens and other animals. This satisfies certain emotional and psychological needs of these neopolites, creating the feeling of the home and ensuring that 'you are not going to be in a flat up in the sky', an alienating and dislocating prospect and experience.

Among certain groups of the Poli population - in particular Neopolites - property, dowry and marriage were issues of central concern for the whole family. Neopolites (as immigrants or refugees) keep most of the ideals of family life that they have internalised during their upbringing in rural or urban areas. The aspirations and expectations of both men and women are that they will educate their children, help them to find a permanent job, own a house of their own and furnish it, and that the children will rise socially and share their achieved level of education, job and income with their extended family. This kind of kinship system exists, at least as an ideal representation in Poli as well as Horio. Attalides (1981:24) comments on kinship and geographical



mobility and addresses the important point that in urban areas the kinship unit undergoes 'substantial changes in the functions of the extended unit which can be explained by reference to the characteristics of the urban, social structure of which it is a part'. Later on Attalides suggests that the homogeneity of the urban population and the small degree of urban-rural differentiation in terms of beliefs and social practices may favour 'the maintenance of rural patterns in the city'. So the extended family continues to serve certain functions, and has new responsibilities and expectations as well:

The problems which confront individuals in the setting up of development are seen to be decisive influences shaping the patterns of family relations. Not only is there no evidence of the weakening of the family but it is seen to fulfil important new functions (Attalides 1981:24).

The dominant elements of social change in Poli can be traced back to the middle of the twentieth century when migration into Poli coincided with a period of rapid commercial development. Seasonal and other patterns of migration developed then and the elements of the class stratification system which still characterise urbanisation in Poli started around the 1950's. This relates to an important point made by Attalides, who argues that problems of adaptation are not in a way peculiar to migrants from villages, but are rather characteristic of lower class families generally.

However, important as class-stratification in the processes of urbanisation in Poli has been and still is, the family as I have argued previously is the basic element in urban as well as rural Cypriot life. The rural-urban, traditional-modern continuum, applies to and has complex effects on most Poli families whatever their class. And as Attalides argues 'it (the family) is not becoming weaker in this urban setting but it fulfils important new functions'. The trend in Poli was and still is towards the conjugal family system. Belonging to a stable family has not only psychological but also political and economic consequences. Take, for example, the fact that the general norm in Cyprus says that kin must be given every possible help when in need, but not at the expense of the inheritance rights of one's own children. This has had significant consequences for Polites in general and the women I studied in particular. Relatives, migrants or refugees in Poli, stayed with some of my participants and found material and emotional help from them.

The flow of refugees created a large pool of unemployment in addition to what must have already been a large pool of disguised unemployment given the continuing prevalence of agricultural small holdings discussed above in the context of Horio [7.(1)].

Conditions were ripe for capitalist development given the consequent low wage labour market and the need to reconstruct the industrial base; government grants made possible the adoption of new techniques of production and changes in work practices which resulted in increased profits.

It has been argued elsewhere that in Cypriot urban areas the kinship unit is neither a replication of the rural extended family nor a nuclear family modelled on the western pattern. In the particular case of Poli I would like to argue that some changes have occurred in the functions of the extended kinship unit, all explicable when the characteristics of the new urban social structure are taken into account. Compared to Western cities, Poli is small and is not characterised by a high degree of heterogeneity and anonymity. In its social life the patisserie substitutes for the village squares, while coffee shops are still the focus of men's outings and social gatherings during their leisure time. In Poli after 1974 the anonymity, dispersion and similar social and psychological problems were diminished since people from the same town or village could find each other in the new associations or coffee shops set up for and largely run by refugees (a similar process, of course, is observable among the Cypriot communities in London).

Also the process of urbanisation in Poli led to a distinctive social structure with changes of emphasis in the kinship and social networks. For example, the adaptation problems in urban areas tended to lead to the decreased prestige of elders and the increased individualism of all members of a family, a process we have already observed in its initial stages in Horio (7.5). It is taken for granted furthermore, that as part of the urbanisation/modernisation process women enjoy increased rights; after all these are visible in the forms of education, paid work and greater freedom of movement.

This last point brings us back to the specific subject of urban women and their identity and position in relation to their families. As I have noted it is generally believed by some sociologists and anthropologists that in urban areas there are different ideologies about the family and women and different sexual relations and social practices. Freedom of choice in marriage is frequently cited as evidence for women's relative freedom and equality. One urban participant though, a 38 year old university graduate in full time work, expressed her doubts and

questioned the commonly held belief that urban women exercise free choice in marriage:

Do we have free choice? Choice means to meet a lot of men, to experience relationships, to be able to choose and be chosen. If it is for material things, a dress, a house, a gas cooker, people don't buy the first one they see in the market. Most of them go out searching with some criteria in mind so that what they buy fits in well with the needs they have. If it is a cooker, then the size, the standard of its capability, the make, the price, the colour even, all these are important criteria and people judge what they find in the market with the ideal they have in mind. Seeing a lot you decide on one by a process of elimination...(laughs). That is more or less what should happen with marriage. Meeting many men without involving feelings of love or guilt, possessiveness and dependence; then women could be able to judge and choose freely. (U.49)

Her argument is that urban women do not have real freedom, the right to meet many men and choose their partner. Joan Ebeid (1982a) rightly argues that people and events are not easy to manipulate and people do modify 'ideal representations' which are only intellectual constructs, that is models of society as they would like it to be and not as it actually is. That is, the common assumption that urban women enjoy freedom and all the opportunities that modernisation offers them is only an ideal representation which in actuality is modified in various ways.

(i) Experiences of Poli Women

The essential relations determining women's social identity remain structurally similar in the rural and urban settings studied here, but the forms through which those identities are expressed differ. In return for certain forms of mechanical assistance (i.e. washing machines and food processors) many urban women have to be always 'presentable' to signify their husband's success; one of their most time consuming occupations is to prepare for masculine gaze and evaluation and more generally, for the judgement of their social milieu.

Women in this position may not be slaves to domestic and/or agricultural labour (although they may well continue to be, to a lesser degree), but in this exchange they condense in the very way they have to appear, their role of being their husband's property, like his new car, his furnished house, his newly equipped office; she is a decorative adjunct and enslaved to that function. A 38 year old woman says:

Once we were invited to a dinner party by the owner of the company for which my husband works as a manager. I knew that the host and the hostess were very formal people and snobs in terms of women's appearance especially. I went through an agonising day trying to fit in looking after the children, the hairdresser, the beauty salon etc. I didn't manage to buy a new dress

although my husband reminded me of it and gave me money for it. In the evening I had to suffer my husband's terrible anger because I wasn't going to represent him, as he expected; he didn't 'feel at all proud' of me and he would 'prefer' me not to accompany him. His boss wouldn't 'think highly of him since his wife was not presentable'. He said so many things about my appearance that I felt like a small doll ready to be inspected by buyers and to be rejected. After he 'sang his hymn' he insisted that I should definitely go with him; how could he go alone to such a party. People would think that we had quarrelled. So I had to dry my tears put on my best face and go, trying to do my best to impress the party by being pleasant since I realised I didn't have any other qualities, according to my husband, for this particular group. The problem was that I did not buy a new dress...(U40).

Another of the urban participants presented her condition. She, like many rural women, had experienced her marriage as servitude.

He became furious and cruel, more cruel than before when I found the courage to open my mouth.... He realised he was losing his servant...as soon as I protested against housework and asked to share both childcare and housework. 'If not, I'll leave you', I threatened... and he answered back with shouts and battering. (U.21).

And what about these women's self-image, their sense of identity? What does a 52 year old middle-class, highly-educated Poli woman, far more conscious in terms of gender identity, sex-role stereotyping and internalisation of oppressive positionings, have to say?

I am now fifty two; too old, for you to be bothered with me...(she laughed and made me laugh too); still since you want my views I will tell

you a few things. We married in England because my husband was studying there in 1948. I was very young. Then... we came to Cyprus and stayed with his parents. Soon I was pregnant, and I felt so lucky when I had a baby boy instead of a girl although I love girls as well. Both grandchildren of mine are girls but they are growing up in England. They are luckier and happier there. The position of women in Cyprus at that time was really shocking. I prayed for the second one to be a boy too. I knew they would have a better life as boys here. Our friends Z. and K. had three girls. All of them had difficult lives in many ways...(U.32).

This quotation abstracted from an in depth interview of two and a half hours illustrates that thirty-two years ago, at the time when many of my informants were born, female children, especially the second or third female child in the same family, were welcomed in neither towns nor villages. Parents knew that it would be a continuous struggle to prepare their dowries, to find the right husband for them, to keep their 'name' up. This is very similar to a rural situation, where, for example, a 'young' 54 year old, a grandmother of twelve grandchildren, discussing the pregnancy of the youngest daughter in law said:

I pray that all my sons (she had six sons and no daughter) give birth to male children only. I was lucky. The daughters need houses today, thousands and thousands of pounds. You have to look after a daughter very carefully until she finds a man to put her under his wings... (R10).



Her response to the child's gender was similar to that of urban women. The difference lies first with the fact that the rural woman was thinking more of her own problems in having a daughter; (daughter's honour, and with it the family name, need to be protected, and a dowry provided) while the urban woman considered the hard life the child herself would have in the social conditions of Poli at the time. Secondly, the urban woman refers to the past, and implicit in what she says is the fact that things are different. However, it is always implicit that women are still oppressed by the given sexual relations in Cyprus: her granddaughters are luckier and happier 'growing up in England'. The reproduction of patriarchal power relations in contemporary Poli is born out by most of my interviewees.

Here a young woman of 31 recalls her experiences when she gave birth to her first child.

He (her husband, a university graduate) was very proud when the first child, a boy, was born. I was very happy too, because I knew that it was what everybody in his family wanted; to perpetuate the family name - 'Bad luck to the one who gives birth to daughters'. This was a comment that I used to hear from my in-laws every now and then during my pregnancy. 'Anyway boys are better for us', my husband used to assure me. Very unkind jokes, sarcastic comments were made about some friends or relatives who had only daughters. And when I gave birth to the much wanted and expected boy, I realised that from the early days in the boy's life he did not belong to

me. They (my in-laws) gave him their names (Christian and surname) and they regarded him as their child only. All his physical characteristics were said to be from his father or his family. 'He did not look at all like me or anybody from my family.' These were their comments and although they said they liked me as a daughter-in-law I was invisible as a person. I existed only as a childbearer and rearer for them. I should be very careful with the child. Feed him well, dress him nicely so that they could be proud of him. If the child didn't put on much weight it was my fault. I almost started feeling a stranger towards my own child. (U4)

During these interviews I tried to prompt older women to speak about their thoughts and feelings about the gender of their children. The following quotation from a 42-year old primary headteacher who had taught in Poli for twenty two years again illustrates the persistence of the old values and their profoundly strong ideology.

We have two daughters studying at universities abroad now. My husband and I work very hard to cope with their expenses. They are very good students but we still worry about their behaviour. When they were with us they were 'excellent'; nobody had a word to say against them. They have 'a free mind now' and we don't know what they do there. Girls are a worry from the moment of birth till the moment of marriage and even beyond that. As a mother I worry a lot about these two girls. They are both clever and pretty and lively. They need their freedom. I understand them because I remember myself at their age, but I have to be strict with them. Their father is shouting at me as if it is my fault that they grew up needing their independence. (U.17)

According to the father it is the mother's fault that these girls want to experience freedom, and the independence and power associated with knowledge. Yet such is the power of existing relations and practices that the majority of women, like U42's daughters, do ultimately surrender to the normative oppressive institutions of marriage and the family as they are traditionally conceived. Their contradictory position, and the choice they face between servitude (4) - the reproduction of their own oppression - and isolation, frequently involving emotional deprivation within their own community, is variously explicit and implicit in all the quotations and frequently and poignantly expressed in the stories of the single unmarried women in Chapter 9.

U.17 spoke sincerely and with a self-critical and intelligent self-awareness. Her rural origin came into the conversation a few times in comments like: 'We were brought up in the village very differently'. 'We do not understand these youngsters very well'. She admitted that she had fallen into the trap of trying to reproduce what she herself had experienced and taken for granted as the proper behaviour for girls both in her school and at home. Her younger daughter, a 19 year old university student, to whom I

spoke when we were alone during our afternoon walk in the small park nearby their house, commented:

Both my parents make me feel very angry. 'Don't do this, don't go there, remember you are a girl.' If I was a boy, something that I know very well both my parents wanted very much, everything would be different. (U.S.3)

The disadvantaged position of women through the oppressive social construction of their identity and the behavioural imperatives based on gender, could not be more clearly underlined: 'something that both my parents wanted very much - a boy -'.

Another woman, a 45 year old housewife and mother of three children, commented on the same issue, spelling out the way gender-differentiation has effects in practice and exercises overwhelming pressure to conform to its rules:

I have two girls and a boy. They are all abroad now studying in Greece and England. It's true that I thought of and worried more about the girls than the boy. I used to quarrel more with them than the boy when they were all adolescents because I had higher expectations from the girls for 'good behaviour'. He had all the freedom that my husband and I decided was good for him. All the restrictions we imposed on the girls had to do with morality, people's gossip etc. As a woman I know how difficult it is to 'keep your name up' and I fought for the girls to understand that they were in a different and much more delicate position compared to the boy. They didn't accept it first and we had our quarrels but in the end they conformed. They both got married very early before finishing their studies; ...Sometimes I felt sorry for them, yes. But they are happy now. (U.26)

The failure to deconstruct the implications of what she recounts is revealing, in particular the continuity of 'morality/people's gossip', which are pushed by common sense passivity, into a metonymic relationship. That morality and people's gossip constitute each other and are interchangeable, is a universal feature of the language of patriarchal power relations from the inside, as it were. What alters, from one participant to another, is the degree to which they are aware of this process and the extent to which they are critical of it.

The reality of this particular example is that both girls saw marriage as the only solution for getting away from their parents' authority and restrictions. Only through marriage could they go out and enjoy themselves in male company without others creating a big fuss and problems for themselves. They assessed the situation critically and, unlike their mothers, chose with their eyes open to the massive qualifications of their relative independence. Whether they are really happy in their marriage we do not know. Their mother said so. Although she felt sorry for the girls she admitted that she never put up a fight with her husband to change his attitudes. That they did not ultimately resist is hardly surprising given the drastic nature of the alternative.

The following is a completely different example from a young urban woman who studied abroad for her graduate and post graduate work in a very specialised scientific subject. Her own position is, I need hardly point out, unusual in the world of Poli as, indeed, are the relations between the parents:

Perhaps I belong to an exceptional Poli family. My mother is a practising doctor and she was always very busy either with her patients or studying. My father, a high rank governmental employee, always helped at home a lot. He did most of the housework when me and my sister were young and he brought us up with no complaints or problems... It was a reversal of roles in some ways and he was very happy because we were what characters and sex we were born, we were ourselves. We always lived in this part of Poli and I was science orientated from my primary school years. At the Polytechnic I was among the minority; only ten per cent of all students of Athens Poly - were women and I expected to find a different situation in England. Unfortunately I was the only female student doing the special subject I chose in Cambridge. All the others were males. I am sure that my parents' behaviour towards each other and towards us has affected my choices in life until now. I was appreciated for being science orientated and was encouraged in my studies. I was always aware of what was happening to a lot of my women friends in Cyprus and I often felt sorry for them. (U.S.4)

As she describes them, her upbringing, sense of identity and self-image, education and the relations of the parents are unique among my case-studies. Her family situation is strikingly at odds with the traditional one with which we are by now thoroughly familiar. Her father did most of the housework....; it was a reversal of roles in some ways and he was

very happy because 'we were what characters and sex we were born - we were ourselves.' It would be fascinating to trace the conditions which made this family situation possible. An obvious starting-point is to remark that the family is in the upper echelons of Poli society, highly - indeed exceptionally - educated, privileged in all these ways and more. No doubt in this family too there would be a major investment in the value of education per se. One suspects that other conditions like the relatively westernized, modern upbringing of this woman's own parents must come into play too. For the traditional-modern continuum to be interrupted so decisively implies a complex history of resistance to the social norm to the given power relations.

In the following interview with a 60 year old teacher the issue returns to the traditional or ideal representation.

I have two daughters and a son. My husband is ill now, paralysed. He was much older than me when we got married. He was my headmaster from our marriage until he retired. I always worked in order to be able to educate (va moqqawaw ) my children and prepare the dowry for the girls. My first one didn't want to get a university degree so she followed a short secretarial course in England and when she came back she worked for a few months, then got married and stopped working. She doesn't need to work. Her life is so different from mine. She has to attend many social functions because of her husband's position. I wish and pray all day long now that

my second daughter marries well too. She is of a good age now. (My emphasis, according to the change in her voice.) (U.30)

In her last sentence this woman shows clearly what role expectations she had internalised and tried consciously or unconsciously to reproduce them both in her daughters and in her female students. She was the third teacher that I had interviewed, and a very interesting case study because she referred in detail to her 40 years of teaching, some in all-girls schools, the 'parthenagogia' (literally translated: schools for educating virgins). Her education did not make her question traditional views about gender roles and the presence of her older husband, who was also professionally her senior, was obviously a negative factor in questioning her own position and her attitude towards bringing up the girls.

From her perspective, of course, her daughter has really married well. She is maintained by a wealthy husband and by implication, occupies the position of decorative adjunct. This woman's words bring out forcefully the extent of parental investment in their children, a key process in the reproduction of existing values and social relations.



All the above quotations show that Cypriot women suffer as daughters from rules and sex role stereotyping which are set out by society and imposed by parents; the mother is usually given the job to police the daughter and enforce a code of behaviour accepted by society. The fact that upbringing and social conditioning constitute women's identities in accordance with existing social power relations is the root of the problems that most women have to live with for their whole life. They are conditioned to believe that their life is directed towards marriage and reproduction, their main 'destination in life', as one of my interviewees (U.64) a 49 year old skilled worker and mother of four daughters, put it.

Finally, I should like to return to the subject of women's views on marriage to discover the extent of urban women's freedom to choose their husbands, the question which introduced these case studies. The discussion here starts with an urban middle class, 29 year old mother of two children a university graduate but 'just' a housewife and a mother, as she described herself, married to a high-rank official:

What do you mean by choice? To marry or not to marry? If it is that I didn't have freedom of choice not to marry and go on with the kind of studies that I wanted. Not only did I have to marry but to marry well. This is what my parents and the whole family expected. When I asked for

permission to stay abroad for a few more years they all rushed about introducing me to dozens of young men; they organised lots of parties and brought me many eligible bridegrooms. I played their game for a little while and enjoyed the parties. Then I couldn't stand it and threw myself into reading and then again outings. There I met my husband. My parents were very happy. His job was so prestigious. His family background accepted. I was encouraged to get to know him well. I just wonder what my life would be like if I had insisted on not marrying. I compare myself with other single women. Many times I feel very lucky for not failing to get married and especially for getting married to one of the best possible cases. (U.1)

Her freedom of choice is clearly rather an illusory one. She has no effective choice, within the context of her family and community, to decide whether or not to marry nor what kind of man to choose. The pressure to marry actually prevents her continuing her studies as she wishes. Even her choice of the specific man to marry is reduced to the level of a modified form of arranged marriage by the processes of selection and decision making she describes.

A 37 year old housewife who had only a secondary school education, and was now mother of two boys of 14 and 16, describes her own experience which brings us closer to that of rural women described in the previous chapter:

My parents - I was adopted at the age of 4 - sent me to secondary school but never intended to allow me to go on to higher education. They wanted to marry me off early. My dowry house was already ready and they started getting proposals

before I had left school. They used to tell everybody that as soon as I finished school they would get me married. 'She has had enough education. She is a woman. The sooner she has her family, the better for her.' I was so ashamed listening to all this, especially if prospective in-laws were present. They turned down some proposals. I remember in some cases they used to tell me all the bad things they heard about the man or his family and other relatives and then ask me if I want him. Since I always relied on their advice and got my information through them I would say no. About my husband they asked a lot and everywhere. They liked him and advised me to think about him seriously. I thought about him seriously and told them: OK I will marry this one. (U.42)

In this case there is still notional choice but it is so clearly directed by parental guidance that it cannot be regarded as a significant factor. My case studies would suggest that the extent to which choice of spouse is apparently given to women is determined by class and education.

The decision as to when and whom to marry was taken in some cases by the women themselves, especially in situations where they had experienced education abroad, while the parents and other members of the family were supporting, guiding or refusing from the background. In some other cases the freedom was very limited. A man was only able to follow up his initial attraction to a woman in the form of a marriage proposal. As one 25-year-old secretary said: 'He saw me at the office, he liked me and sent his proposal'

(U.18) In another similar case we see the traditional values, associating women in a 'women versus women' situation, allying always with patriarchal values.

A 28 year old secondary school teacher, unemployed and a mother of two, commented bitterly that her in-laws did not want her because she belonged to a family of five girls, and therefore she could not have much property. She then said:

We met at the University in Athens, we spoke a few times and during the summer he asked my parents for their permission to get engaged to me. I agreed. (U.38)

In all the above mentioned cases the men followed the 'normal' traditional procedure of approaching the parents of the girl formally to ask for her hand. The fact is that the couple may have spoken a few times before, exchanging information like: 'I want to go to your parents and ask for you; do you agree?' 'Do you want to go to a cafe for a chat?' or 'Do you want to marry me?' This is already a departure from the traditional model. Apart from that though, the conventional morality was not at all violated. All the women mentioned above made a special point about their good name, which showed how strongly they still identified with the ideal of virginity and female

chastity. 'My forehead was always clean', i.e. I have always been a virtuous woman: this was a phrase that most women interviewed reiterated during the session or sessions we had together.

Modern needs and circumstances, for example young people meeting at the now mixed secondary schools, later on at work and at social and political gatherings, have made the 'mixing' - the contact at the social level - of the sexes inevitable. But the ideal representations remain. In a few other cases (for example U.5 a 30 year old woman who had lived abroad for nine years studying and who married a post-graduate fellow student), the couple exercised their right of choice and decision-making freely since they did not have any parents or close relatives to impose their views on them.

The general rule, though, in Poli was that the ideal of the arrangement of marriage by the family has been modified into giving the young people freedom to meet and, to the young men especially, freedom to follow their own preference. They are the ones who initiate and direct marriage negotiations in one way or another. In this modified form the young woman has the 'freedom' to be informed about the man's intentions by him directly or by her parents. Her opinion is taken into account in most cases.

What happens after marriage? Are feelings an important element in those women's lives? Do they find happiness and fulfillment in their married life (the only acceptable state for a mature Cypriot woman)?

What do I feel about him? I can't give a straightforward answer to this question. We have been married for 12 years now. My feelings at the beginning were confused. I wasn't in love with him. A few months after we met we got married and I found myself in a nice big house, with a lovely baby boy in my hands within a year. Things happened so quickly that I couldn't really digest these experiences. We spent a lot of time with each other. The responsibilities of social life kept us very close to each other. I would like to call these feelings love and devotion. (U.1)

This is what a 29 year old graduate woman said about her marital relationship. In a similar way another 32 year old university graduate, mother of two, said:

I get pleasure and fulfillment out of my relationship with my husband, my job, my kids. I feel I have a balance in my life. I work in the circles that I want to be in; I see my women friends every now and then but I am not committed to the women's movement.... I know I have been lucky to be born to educated parents, to have the education I had and marry a person with whom I can communicate. (U.2)

This woman put communication as the main factor of the happiness she obtains from marriage. On the other hand a 27 year old mother of two young children gave very different reasons for deriving pleasure from her marriage:

I feel proud of my husband. He has an important governmental position. We are all so happy to see him on T.V. on his official engagements. I am happy to accompany him on some of the social evenings out and meet people from his work.. We do not talk much between us besides our kids, our parents. I know he is busy. I don't want him to spend his time with me. And I don't like all those women who speak about equality. We are O.K. Most of us have home-help or nannies when the kids are small. That is what my husband believes also. We agree. I like my house, I made it up as I wanted it because my parents could afford the things I wanted. I like being married. (U.37)

A completely opposite situation is the one experienced by a 48-year-old professional woman (mother of 'only' four daughters) married to a professional, her 'boss at work since they were young'. She said:

I think I suffer from a lot of things; some gynaecological problems that the doctors haven't managed to cure yet. I'm in and out of the hospital so often... I don't see my husband. He is 'always so busy'... as he says... Left alone with the girls I do my best to stay sane.. (She felt very distressed and started crying so the interview was interrupted for a while. Her family situation was bad and greatly affected her psychologically.) (U.9)

Also another woman, 33-years-old and mother of two found herself in a similar situation:

Lately things are getting worse and worse. I see problems everywhere. Since the marriage relationship has been seriously questioned I started going to a psychoanalyst. I don't know if it helps me at all but I have to speak to somebody, since I cannot speak to my husband. I'm in full-time work, and housework and childcare are all waiting for me when I come back. On top of that I have to keep up with my interests (reading and writing) and try... to save my relationship with my husband... There are many moments that I want to disappear and leave them all behind. (U.3)

These two women, and many more in a similar situation, have experienced marriage as suffering. On similar lines a 30 year old middle class housewife described her marriage as a continuous series of disappointments.

I was the only daughter after two boys and my father loved me very much. I was free to eat what I liked as a child, to go where I wanted as an adolescent. My father put up some boundaries I shouldn't cross, but I was able to invite my friends at home. I was dreaming of marriage, a nice house, children, coffee afternoons with friends. Reality is very different. I find problems everywhere. No communication between me and my husband. I really feel trapped. I liked my husband and before he came to my parents to ask for me we discussed between us our future married life, my refugee status, my work, etc. Problems started as soon as we had our first child. Housework and childcare was all mine. He never cared if I was tired coming from work or not, and never offered to help me with dinner or the child. He didn't want to learn anything around the house. I deprived myself of all my interests, reading, political gatherings, musical events. My mother helps me a little. I wonder why communication between my husband and myself stopped so abruptly. (U.25)



The problem of non-communication between the couples was a big issue in many other interviews, the most lively of which is the following with a very successful 35 year old career woman, a graduate married to a graduate:

We never had a serious conversation between us without his jokes and his laughing at me and at my ideas coming out so severely. At the beginning he seemed to me an interesting person. He takes politics and economics and every-day life seriously and discusses it with a lot of other people but not with me. I gave up with him. I keep most of my thoughts from him and turn to my women friends for real company and communication. If I dare mention the women's movement he calls me a fool. (U.4)

During this interview she greatly resented the fact that because there was no communication between her and her husband their children were affected seriously. She believed that he wanted to change her, to make her somebody he dreamed of years and years ago, another person - not the one he married. She also referred to the fact that her husband has copied his own father in his cruel and disrespectful behaviour towards his wife. These two men, both educated and with status among the people of their class, were the 'best' practitioners of the patriarchal ideology: hypocrisy or downgrading their wives in front of others, asserting themselves as the male dominant figure in every social gathering, was and is their everyday behaviour.

Among the urban women, worse cases than the above mentioned were also recorded. One 43 year old professional woman married to a hard working politician confided to me that he had been beating her for years and years.

I can't remember the first time that he started. It was very difficult for me to accept it. He has quick temper. Drunk or not drunk he shouts and screams and beats me. Our two kids had a lot of frights from him. I wish I could leave. To go where? Now that we have lost our houses, our property, .... life is so difficult. My girl is now ready for the university and the boy will join the army for his compulsory service. Their life is what interests me. If they are going to have a better life with their father around, then I will stay, however hard life is for me. I am especially thinking of their studies and their marriages. Above all for the girl; if we separate and the Cypriots start gossiping how can she gain a good name so that people will send proposals for her? Even if we live in a town, gossip goes around so easily and people take such things as a divorce or problems between parents very seriously. They judge the child from what they hear about the parents (U.10)

Marriage as continuous suffering with battering as its extreme problem was experienced by a 50 year old professional woman married to a well-known person in Poli social and professional circles. She said:

I used to beg him when he was angry 'kill me if you want but please, do not shout'. The children (two boys) will hear you and wake up. They will be disturbed. Our son has exams tomorrow. Feel pity for our children if not for me. (U.6)

But as she said, on a particular night, her husband went on shouting and kicking her until he felt he had taken out all his fury. When I asked how he started beating her she said:

He came home very late and asked me to get up from bed and prepare a mint tea for him. He seemed prepared for a fight. I became very tense, 2 o'clock in the morning to wake me for tea instead of doing it himself however tired he was. I dared tell him: 'you are very late again. I went to sleep because I was very tired. The kids were quarrelling all afternoon'. His only answer was: what right do you have to question me where I go and where I don't (U.6)

That is how the quarrel went on that night. That was the kind of behaviour repeated towards her since then. She went on:

I heard from friends and confirmed it through his behaviour towards me that he had many girl friends and I was really hurt. I cared for him so much and could not accept his behaviour easily. He almost hated me and the children. Perhaps he thought that we were in his way, not giving him space and time to enjoy his relationships. He wanted to have everything. Family, house, a good job, mistressess. I was a good-housekeeper for him, a faithful wife, a caring mother. The boys were growing up very well; I looked after their health, their education, their sports, their holidays. All the responsibilities on me, all the free time to him. I put up with his successive affairs for many years. Whenever I dared open my mouth to try and tell him how bad I felt he ended up beating me. I used to cry quietly in case the children noticed anything or the neighbours talked about us. It was a 'real hell' for me to have to put up on my mask, to smile and make jokes with him in front of others in case they guessed our problems. It was more difficult when his girl friend was present, since he insisted on

going out with her and her husband. I had to play all the techniques of social hypocrisy. Sometimes when he was beating me he shouted various names at me and wanted to dehumanise me to show complete disrespect and sarcasm. (U.6)

This was the most severe case that I recorded where the couple were still married despite the relationship being so bad. Battering among educated couples was recorded also during the interview with another 36 year old woman who said:

He beat me a few times at the beginning of our marriage. When I threatened to speak about it he stopped. He did not want to lose his public image. That is what mattered for him, and the only thing he dreaded to lose. (U.4)

From these extracts a lot of other points came out, as well as wife-beating and the difficulty most women find in even thinking about divorce. U.10 speaks very explicitly about the constraints that a daughter puts on the mother. This particular woman had to put up with a violent husband also involved in drinking and gambling for the sake of the daughter, so that she would have a 'father' around until she married. U.6 clearly points out how maternal feelings and the desire not to hurt children make women incapable of finding solutions to unbearably violent marriages.

On the other hand U.4 points out that in her particular case the threat of making public their family problems worked to her benefit because the husband valued his public image.

### Female sexuality

Sexuality was a taboo issue. Some of my participants answered this question with a yes or no and changed the subject, others ignored the issue, others expanded willingly after asking for my confidentiality again. The first woman I quote here seems astonishingly courageous; a 30 year old university graduate married to a 'leftist activist', a university graduate himself, she had, what her father called a 'dangerously free mind'.

Yes, we talk freely about sex. We discuss everything that bothers us or crosses our minds. Both of us had been educated abroad and had premarital affairs. We met during our studies and married there. Because of the demands of our courses we had to live away from each other for some months and both had extramarital affairs. Neither of us were serious about them. Our relationship has a priority in our life. I am not sure if I will not feel threatened in the case of a real love relationship that he may have... I always had a bad relationship with my father who is a patriarch in every way and I rebelled early in my life. I feel so lucky that my husband differs so much from him. (U.5)

In contrast a 54-year-old lower middle class woman who never did paid work, said:

My marriage is like a fairy-tale for me: thirty seven years ago! I was the first daughter out of 6 and my father stopped my secondary education as soon as mother died. I wanted to become a teacher. But he said that he saw me on my way to school, passing by the coffee shop where he was sitting and he realised that I had grown a lot. I had become 'a woman'. I shouldn't be out of the house so much any more. So, since my mother had died I had to take upon me all the responsibility for the housework and soon father got me engaged to my husband, who had a very good job and who wanted me very much, because I was 'pretty'! Everybody in the town spoke about my marriage but nobody knew that I wasn't happy. He was much older than me. We had different needs. (U.33)

At that point I dared put to her a more pressing question: 'Do you want to speak about what you knew on sex, how you found your first experiences and any problems in your sexual relationship?'

Well,... we are O.K. It is a shame really to talk about such things. God forgive us. This is men's talk. Women have a lot of other things to talk about. (U.33)

#### Women versus women: The divide and rule principle

So far I have discussed women's relationships with their husbands. There are, however, other members of the extended family who in one way or another influence the life of Cypriot married women. Both in rural and urban areas, a mother-in-law is in some

cases a factor; either staying with the couple until she dies or visiting them from Mondays to Saturdays to look after the children if the woman is working; in other cases the mother in law comes in and out of the house 'invited or not invited' especially if she offered the dowry house to her daughter. Since the men are usually out, it is the wives that have to deal with both their own mother and their husband's mother. In some of the case studies, the mothers were living nearby and were available whenever wanted for babysitting. One 61 year old mother was living with her daughter's family and looking after the children. Her example shows how problems usually arise when a mother-in-law is living with the couple.

I have been a mother in law now since September 1976 when my daughter married. My own mother-in-law died eleven years ago now. She lived with us after we got married. I tried to forget our difficult moments. She was a rich woman who married late, had one child only, my husband, and was very attached to him. When her son and I got engaged she complained fiercely at me not having as big a dowry as she expected. The fact that I was a teacher with a good stable salary was not enough for her. After marriage I had to work in a village far from the town and I had to leave my first child with her. She looked after the baby and my husband, and the boy was named after my father-in-law; she was proud that she was caring after them very well. I had to put up with various kinds of complaints during the weekend. My husband never took my part in any kind of conflict. There we were, two women fighting with words around him and for him; that was the reality. She felt I had taken him from her. He, on the other hand, treated our conflicts as excuses to be out of the house longer and have his own 'private' life. It was so difficult for me. I used to lock my room and

cry alone. I was ashamed in case other people noticed my real relationship with my husband and my mother-in-law. Social hypocrisy, as I told you before, is a game that I learned to play very well during my marriage. I looked after her when she was ill, paralysed in bed for five years. If I was to say a word, about him helping me to look after her since I was in full-time work all the time, he answered back 'you're eating up her property, you should look after her'. Now that I have to live with my daughter to look after the children, I try not to repeat what I have suffered with the old woman. I am very careful. (U.55)

Urban women spoke more freely about their relationships with their in-laws, especially the mother-in-law. It was one of the weak points of relationships between women. One woman comes into conflict with the other and they are both ridiculed and manipulated by their men. Poli women who commented on this issue considered the reaction of their husbands very crucial, to the extent that their relationship with their mother-in-law affected their lives very badly.

A 52 year old urban woman, herself a mother-in-law now, but with both sons married and living abroad, discussed her relationship with her own mother-in-law and her husband's reaction to it.

There are in Cyprus so many sayings and proverbs and songs about the relationship between a daughter and a mother-in-law. She is usually represented as the unwanted person, a snake or a fox. All the jokes speak about bad relationships between the two women. In my case things were more complex. She had only two sons: my husband



and his brother, who emigrated to Australia early in his adulthood. So all her hopes and dreams and demands were on my husband. She was a strong character and wanted a lot of attention. My husband was very firm with her. Whenever she interfered with my housework or childcare he put her in her place. We had a reasonably good relationship once she understood through her son's comments that I had my position of power in that household. (U.31)

### 8.3 Urban women, education and paid work

In Poli, 70.4% of the women interviewed were involved in some kind of full-time work and/or studies. As discussed above in Chapters 2 and 6, it is very difficult to speak clearly about Cypriot women's class position, work and aspirations without discussing their husbands' work, the economic needs of their family and childcare facilities. Besides factual information about their job, I managed to gather general comments like the following:

A professional woman of thirty two mother of two children said:

I like working. I am using the knowledge I gained from my studies, using my brains, concentrating on a project besides my everyday routine. (U.2).

A 41 year old cleaning lady at a primary school said:

I work because I need the money to build a house for my daughter. Also I have to send the boy to the university as soon as he finishes the army. (U.54).

A primary headteacher of 43 explained:

I have always worked since I left college and I've always needed the money, although we are not poor. Our standard of living and the needs of our two girls, obliged both of us - my husband and myself to work. They are still at the primary school, but as soon as they go to the secondary we must start saving for their house and their studies if they are good. (U.43.)

A 47 year old housewife mother of two responded:

My father built my dowry house before I left the secondary school and they got me engaged as soon as I got my certificate. My husband has a good salary and I've never worked so far. I have a lot to do at home. Everything here is left to me. (U.11)

A 38 year old teacher complained:

I wish I didn't have to work at all. I get so tired at school and then I come home and start here. Three children, my husband and my old mother living with us. She cannot help. By the end of the day I am so exhausted and I dream of my retirement day, to be able to look after my house as I want and have some free time for myself. (U.63)

Of the 64 married women interviewed 35 were working full-time and 9 part-time only. Of these 23 said that they work because they are used to doing some kind of work outside the house. The extra money they earn helps their family and they do not take their work very seriously. If they did not need the money they would not work. Another 8 women hated the fact that they were working and that they had to cope with 'orders from above', the boss; "at least", they said, "I am a queen at home. I have nobody on top of me".

The rest, 13 married women from all professional sectors, lawyers, teachers, headteachers and nurses, said that they loved their job. They were not doing it only for money but were getting a lot of satisfaction out of it.

In Poli generally there are some women involved in their husband's businesses and, like rural women who work unpaid on the family farm without being considered as farm workers, these women do not get a salary. Most urban working women are paid, and they had their own views on the question of whether their 'own salaries' gave them freedom. A 33 year old mother of two girls said:

My husband takes my cheque and changes it with his own and they are both considered the family's budget. We are refugees now and we need every penny. I have no right to spend money on myself. We have to make a new home... Well he goes out with his friends and to the teachers' union and football matches... but he is a man... I don't smoke but he does... It costs, yes... I have very little cash in my hands because he does most of the shopping. (U.25)

Another agreed:

My cheque goes straight to the Bank to a common account. For big expenses, even for amounts more than £10, I have to discuss it with him and let him know what I am spending. (U.4)

A non-working 31-year-old urban woman on the other hand said:

I never worked, so he used to give me a family allowance with which I had to look after the house, the children, the home-help and myself.

Sometimes it was difficult but I never dared insist on more because whenever I did there was a conflict. The children saw us quarreling sometimes and they were very unhappy about us so I used to close my mouth, whenever the atmosphere was tense. I had to take everything inside and shut my mouth. I never questioned the way he spent his salary. If he went out with his friends or for holidays with or without the family it was his decision. I was always at the periphery of his life and decision-making about money was his job. (U.60)

On the other hand a 28 year old graduate married to an ex-university lecturer said:

I had an excellent education abroad and I could easily earn a good salary here. My husband gave me all that I needed through his salary and also gave me the freedom to decide if I wanted to work or not. I did not want to engage myself either in further studies or work for the moment and I faced no financial or other problems. (U.45)

The issue of work and education was previously discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of this thesis and this reference to the issue here serves only as a reminder of diverse views and practices as well as dichotomies existing among urban educated women.

#### 8.4 Urban women, politics and social life

Some women in Poli, as in other Cypriot towns, are 'freer' to participate in political, cultural and social life. In Chapter 6 I indicated the range of women's organisations, whether linked with or

independent of political parties, trade unions and associations. The women of Poli, because of their higher educational standards, can read women writers and journalists, and encounter women working in an, albeit limited, range of professional (i.e. socially significant) positions.

Some of my respondents drew attention to these 'freedoms' but the contradictions are also evident. It is best understood as a 'freedom' that does not dislodge or transform the constraints I have discussed through the thesis. Indeed these new opportunities can become an extra burden to those of paid work, child and home care, etc. As a 35-year-old lawyer said:

I have been given the freedom to go abroad to study. I experienced the freedom of Western women. I gained in knowledge, independence, self esteem. I felt proud of my professional interests and I was steadily building up my self-confidence. Then I came back and attempted to practise as an independent lawyer; I immediately came face to face with prejudices against my gender. 'A woman lawyer; can you trust her?' or 'She cannot defend you as well as a man lawyer can, do not go to her.'

I struggled through these deeply rooted prejudices even among urban and professional people. Marriage gave me a status, some status, in the eyes of the outside world and increased my clients a bit but created a hell of a lot of responsibilities in my private life and affected my professional achievements in the end. Child and housecare on top of mothering my husband were added to my office responsibilities. (U.4)

Another woman, 33 year old, mother of two girls (two, and four and a half years old), and a secondary school teacher herself, struggled in both fields, private and public, home-family and work-school; she had first to persuade her husband and his family that, since they needed the money she should keep her job even after the birth of the first child, and later to struggle with her colleagues to persuade them that she was as good as the men for promotion purposes:

'If you can help me a little bit with the hard jobs of housework then I will ask our parents to look after the baby during my teaching time', I told him, trying to keep up my job until the baby was old enough to go to a nursery.... He answered that he didn't know how to do housework, he would never learn women's work and that his mother never taught him such things.... I was in a desperate situation until the baby was old enough to take her to the nursery. I was going mad... And then at school.... that is a big, very big story. (U.18)

Another urban married woman, mother of two girls, wrote in her autobiography book in 1982 ( To Fos Pou Skotonei (The light that kills)-TENEZI A.)

Men feel offended when two women come close to each other. They suspect that a conspiracy against them is being built up between the women who 'speak for hours and hours' about their problems. The fact is though that they never spend time to listen to them, they deny themselves the effort to understand them. The impasse continues. What are the possibilities for a happy life for my daughters? Can they get out of this impasse of women? Can I help them or am I going to burden them with my own problems? (1982:45)

One of the urban women pointed out the specific problems and attitudes that she had to face, when she decided to join a political party and also work for her trade union.

Male friends and neighbours of my age had been involved in a political party for some years and were trying to persuade me that my mind would broaden if I read this and that book, if I have clear positions on the political problems of my country. I joined their party at the beginning out of curiosity and a need to be outside the house. Both my husband and my father were declared communists themselves and they couldn't say no to my political involvement. I was mature enough at the time to get into serious discussions about the positions of the party on the politics of the country and the world. At the beginning I was listened to by male colleagues with some curiosity I think, then I noticed comments showing disrespect about my gender and the seriousness of my politics. As time went by and I showed great interest in the administrative side of the party's 'private' life there was opposition in a disguised and more effective way about me being elected to the central committee on the basis of my gender.... I was disappointed in the end and withdrew both from the trade union and from the party. (U.61)

Another woman, 30 year old with postgraduate degrees and a high ranking governmental position (U.21) complained of the fact that her male colleagues, when asked, declared that they respected her professional qualifications and abilities very much, as well as her character, but they could not vote for her as their trade union representative because as a woman she had some disabilities compared to male candidates.

### 8.5 Conclusion - Urban life for Greek Cypriot women

From the above investigation we can conclude that most of these urban women in one way or another experienced some difficulties in their marital relationships. Marriage in Cyprus is the only acceptable status an adult Greek Cypriot woman should have, since it is presumed to be her main source of happiness. Where women are happy it is where they accept 'ideal representations' as complete and valid, and in most of my cases they accepted marriage as the only answer to societal pressures against singleness. Their rural counterparts are also in a similar or worse position. The dowry system and the arranged marriage still exist in both urban and rural settings: but in towns these are shown in a varied, modified, 'disguised' form. Among urban women there are bigger variations according to class and education as compared to rural women.

The general comments stemming from the case studies of Horio and Poli could be summarised as follows. In both cases there is a pervasive ideology of male dominance. The specific forms may be different but the principles are the same. In some urban cases I recorded real change in attitudes but in others there was only an illusion of equality. In the urban



setting structural changes give some freedom of movement, some anonymity, some cultural events to attend since transport facilities or even privately owned cars mean that women are not tied down to their homes. Furthermore, in Poli there is more scope for the individual husband to 'make' his wife's life happier because of the different version of the ideology of male dominance; that is, taking his wife to the cafe or a cultural gathering as well as his token participation in housework give the illusion of 'sharing'. He is then accepted more easily for the dominant elements of his behaviour - the protector's behaviour during their outings, for example.

In contrast to the rural women, there was a greater willingness amongst urban women to discuss what was considered taboo. It is important to note here though, that this happened with middle class and/or middle aged women who, generally because of their class background and age, feel more secure to 'open up' and speak about these subjects and experiences. Among the interviewed urban women contradictions in their lives and beliefs were apparent. Sometimes the ideal representations prevailed for example about childbearing where a wish was obvious to elevate motherhood to a social mission, something that the Church most willingly would support. So some of the

participants expressed both conservative and progressive views on an issue in the same or successive interviews. This points out to the dilemmas they are facing; also that these women are struggling within themselves to conform with the tradition or to modify it, or hide everything under a veil of hypocrisy and manage to survive and even have an easy life. These contradictions are very important because they show the power of the traditional model, the religious, ideological representation of women as mothers first (5) and persons second. This ideal is struggling to survive under present socioeconomic conditions in Cyprus which now enclose in their structures the birth of a new positive image of women as mothers and workers or professionals; this is a desired practice, a way of women being in the world without losing their position in the family.

It is very difficult to argue that such contradictions will simply be erased by ideological analysis or critique and, although 'discovered' and challenged by women, it is not clear that women alone can transform the situation whilst patriarchal ideology persists within the defining institutions of Church and State. There are some changes which I report in Chapter 11, but the contradictions discussed there show also the

limits to such significant events. Some Cypriot women see the need, urgently now, to revolt and 'blow the tradition into the air', as U.14 said, in order to bring some changes. That is what some of the divorced urban women did. Their lives and reactions to what happened to them are discussed in detail in the following chapter dealing with those normally called 'Problem Women', that is women without men-male protectors, to 'look after them' i.e., define them as normal.

The conclusion to this study of urban women and their position in relation to traditional values around marriage and power relations, to their families, men and their rural sisters, is then clear enough. The apparent autonomy and equality enjoyed by predominantly middle class educated urban women, compared with their rural and less advantaged urban sisters, is essentially illusory. The complex of traditional values, modern practices and unchanging or very slowly changing sexual power relations, produces conflict, contradiction and continued frustration rather than increased freedom for women. It is from this perspective that I turn to the subject of my next chapter, problem women or women without men.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 8

1. Attalides 1981 and Rangou 1984 commented on the typicality of Poli in terms of its rapid expansion in light industry which hastened the urbanisation process.

2. The term NEOPOLITES is the transliteration of the Greek word 'neo' for new and 'polites' for the inhabitants of Poli. This term was used by three of my informants, refugees from villages and small towns in the North who settled in Poli in 1974 and who by 1980 considered it their permanent place of residence.

3. For some urban families the factor of land ownership in a rural area, be it the parents' village or a place where other ancestral land was bequeathed to them, was reflected in the way familial values were in accordance with those of their rural roots. For example, U.53, a 19 year old woman who wanted to dress up like her peer group of young girls in Poli, was continuously reminded of the family patterns of her grandfather's village. She was expected to behave as the granddaughter of Hatzipanagi from village Z.

4. These women had no choice.

5. Caldwell 1982b and 1983 discuss the issue of the ideological representation of women as mothers first and the state concern about motherhood.

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CHAPTER 9: PROBLEM WOMEN

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Single Women
- 9.3 Divorced and Separated Women
- 9.4 Problem women and the 1984 war
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  - (ii) Widows and war widows.
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## CHAPTER 9: PROBLEM WOMEN

### 9.1 Why the term Problem women

Here I turn to women whose experiences, formed the starting point for this thesis, and to the specific issues illustrated in Part I, now addressing the position of WMPns and women in comparable situations from the perspective achieved through the intervening chapters. I begin with single women because their predicament in present day Cyprus, rural and urban, has been excluded from the case studies and the discussions of marriage and the family, just as single women themselves are excluded in reality from the social world, and always defined negatively. I then go on to deal with the related - in terms of what their position illustrates about the constitution of Greek Cypriot social relations - category of separated and divorced women, before turning finally to the women whose problems have been created in the first instance by the war, but the true nature of whose predicament is largely concealed because the state and society as a whole fail to perceive that their problems have their roots in existing oppressive patriarchal sets of ideas and practices.

I use the term 'problem women' mainly to emphasise the fact that women who do not have a husband or father protector are seen as social problems, and are pointed out and policed as such. Also because within the society itself these women are normally referred to as quite simply 'problem women'. The source of their problematic quality is believed to be rooted in themselves - that is, it is their fault that they create problems for society. Fear of being single and effectively excluded from the established patterns of their community was seen, in the previous chapter, to be a critical factor in forcing women to conform. Of course, some women can be identified in this way at any time, but as was seen, one result of the 1974 war was a rapid dislocation of the established structures of social life and a sudden increase in the number and social visibility of such women. Such categories of, or names of women signal the ways that women with men are not seen to have or to be problems. The exceptional case, marking the boundary of what is normal here, as everywhere, serves to illustrate what 'normality' conceals, and poses difficulties for the State and common sense notions of normality. This contrasts with the way State regulation of morals and policies with deeply rooted ideas and practices, normally poses problems for those it positions as disadvantaged.

Some of the specific points this chapter deals with are:

The ways in which expectations that women should be married come to restrict the movement of women whose situation does not conform to those expectations and negatively defines these women. In rural areas neighbours and the family oversee and pass comment on everything that the woman does. This family and community interference and moral control applies in the urban areas too, but with the additional consequences for professional and other working women that they are also stereotyped and subject to intensive attention at their places of work.

It is not being claimed here that all women without men are exactly similarly located; there are clear differences between both rural and urban contexts, and between say, the situation of elderly single unmarried women and the situation of the younger women who come from refugee families. But the important point being illustrated is the way in which a normally implicit set of ideological and institutional practices is made visible by all such women in ways which make them problems.

One important feature to note is the way in which married women now without husbands tend to fall under the control of and are policed by both other males (kin) and by the wider families, the man's family often having a claim to greater surveillance despite it being the dowry from the woman's family which established the basis of the original family unit. This is part of the process by which women are identified with property and as property, already illustrated and discussed in chapters 4, 7 and 8.<sup>(1)</sup>

As generally discussed in Part II, Chapter 4 and illustrated in Chapters 7 and 8, one of the ways in which that patriarchy specific to societies like Cyprus operates is to establish an 'internal' sense of identity as much as working through the external set of expectations of others. The external forces which perpetuate the sexual status quo are both interpersonal, parental, familial expectations and more general ones, explicit in gossip in the village, and at places of work - and also a network of

institutional administrative forms and practices. One process common to all these is to fix some women as 'abnormal' to show all the better the acceptability/normality of the rest.

## 9.2 Single Women

This group comprises all those adult Greek Cypriot women who whether by choice or not stay outside marriage.<sup>(2)</sup> They are seen as deviants, as abnormal citizens who have failed to fulfil their duty towards their families and their nation, that is to marry according to norms which are locked into the mutually supportive relationship between institutional policies and the activities of the male dominated population generally. Part of the production of normative models is to humiliate and to ridicule what cannot be included; single women's lives are made painfully difficult because they are contravening the rules about how women should behave and what situation they should occupy: that is, being married. Their sufferings and the social ridicule they experience are a kind of encouragement and threat to the other married women: 'Look what happens if you do not conform'. This recalls the well-known story of the general who, when asked why they shot deserters, replied, 'To encourage the others.' It is of course

an unacknowledged self-defensive strategy and a most effective way of co-opting women into the given view of what is normal according to existing sexual power relations.

The organisation of the whole of Cypriot society insists that women should be dependent on men and the consequences are that life is almost untenable for single women. People treat them unkindly because to do otherwise would call into question the patriarchal imperatives that are taken for granted. This would involve re-evaluating the entire set of assumptions according to which they live. The general treatment of single women does have the effect of encouraging other women to marry and reinforcing the dominant ideology by reassuring the conformists of their normality in order to encourage other women to marry. However this harsh treatment is not the only or the specific reason why single women have such difficulties; the whole society is organised around the ideology that women are and indeed must be dependent on men.

Unmarried women who show they can manage by themselves are considered deviants. For the 'normal' majority to treat them otherwise would be too threatening, for it calls into question the taken-for-granted structure of

the normal, the existing social structure itself. This positioning of single women as abnormal cuts across any class or rural-urban divisions. As an urban woman in her late twenties said:

I just can't stand people anymore when they ask me when I'll get married. As soon as I finished the University and came back the whole family was on to me to accept this or that proposal. I made it clear that I didn't want to marry yet: "Give me a few years to breathe, to enjoy my freedom," I begged. Not long after that I started longing for marriage, to be like the others and not the odd one at every social gathering ..... (U.S.1)

This urban single woman (approaching her 30th birthday) talked constantly about her age. Another woman in a similar situation, this time a rural woman from Horio, was too afraid of the possibility that she might not marry to speak about it directly; and she was ashamed to do so. Because it was a taboo issue for her, she turned the discussion to other lines.

I want to leave the village and go to work in Nicosia. Here I stay at home all the time. I do the housework. Everybody else leaves early and they expect me to do everything nicely and quickly and then sit down to do some 'Levcara Lace' my own embroidered dowry. Sometimes I sell some to the travelling salesman. I get very little payment for it; it is piecework. But it is very tiring and damaging for my eyes. The neighbours come in and gossip a lot, something that I hate and want to get away from. But I can't say to them 'I don't want you to come to my house'. They live next door and they are going to be here until they die. If I'm rude to them they'll try with various stories to destroy 'my name'. I know that they check up on me to see whether or not I'm a clean house-keeper. If I work in the town I'll have the chance to go out everyday and meet people. This is a very small village. (RS 9)

The possibility of leaving the village 'to work in the town to meet people' seemed to her to be the only solution. She desperately needs a change in her life. She knows perfectly well that her chances of getting married and finding the right man from her immediate environment are very limited.

Even urban middle-class single women found it very difficult to get married according to family standards after 1974 because of the 'shortage of eligible men' so widely discussed in social circles.

I'll be 30 in 3 months. My mother (a widow) is desperate. Since my father died all her attention and worries are focussed on me. She feels responsible for not getting me married although she knows that as a woman she is incapable of asking for a bridegroom. All her friends have tried to help but that didn't work out. Most young men that I meet at work have no intention of getting married. They only want to have a girlfriend for some time. I stopped going out. My brother doesn't live near us, so he can't take me out to meet his friends nor can we invite them home so as to broaden our circle. I feel trapped between my need to follow my own way and the duty not to let my brother and mother down since such behaviour will bring gossip and shame on the family. Until now I didn't worry much about my appearance. I feel young and fresh, as they call me, but I know that age is not a joke. I will not be as (and she smiled with some embarrassment) as I am now. Men I know talk a lot about having a young woman and they all want her pretty, as if they, these men, are all handsome and the best in every way. (U.S.11)



Immediately after this interview I was in a mixed group of teachers in a small gathering at the Trade Union headquarters and there I experienced a situation which justified all the anxieties single women feel. There was a single woman headteacher with an excellent academic record, as a member of the executive committee. The discussion went on for sometime. Views were exchanged. As a silent observer I noticed that her views, although they were very sound and exactly to the point of the discussion, were not taken into account. Male teachers exchanged views between themselves and brought the discussion to an end when they wanted. Most people left and, as an observer, I stayed behind with two married women whose husbands were still talking between themselves. They were in fact gossiping about the single woman in a disrespectful way, talking about her face and her wrinkles and her old body and of course 'you cannot expect reasoning and clever contributions from ..... a spinster my friend .....'

She became an object of laughter and curiosity. 'How does she manage to live alone so many years. She must be insane by now....' one man said about this single woman. These were the views of highly 'educated' men about a colleague, a single woman, whose time they used unsparingly for all the tedious day to day

affairs of the union, while they kept for themselves all the positions on governmental committees and invitations to give lectures. On top of these discriminatory practices this single woman had to suffer their ridicule because of her singleness. The pervasiveness of the assumption that single women are abnormal shows in their last comments : how does she manage to live alone? She can't be normal can she? She must be insane to some extent .....

This woman did not stay single by her own choice. Nobody chose her as a wife. Her dream of a married life and children which is shared by every Cypriot woman is unfulfilled. She could start an affair not aiming for marriage. But if she failed relationships she would have to suffer further ridicule, as another single woman of 29 discusses here:

I tried to keep myself above gossip, above and outside affairs, although I used to go to the theatre with men and women friends. Through my involvement in the union I met many unmarried men of my age and interests but I did not go on to start a relationship with any of them. I was so shy. Some contacts that I had when I was young, with a fellow student, left me to pay in the end with any of them because he left for abroad and the few friends that saw us at a cafe together wondered about us. I had to explain how far we had gone, what had happened, why he had left (things that I couldn't understand myself). Then I got engaged to a person I liked very much. We were planning our marriage and I thought we were happy because we had so many things in common. We bought the land for our house and some furniture and then suddenly one morning he said

that he couldn't marry me. He didn't feel mature enough... He couldn't take the responsibility etc. I could not believe it because we never had a single problem since we met. I loved him so much and I was broken. My family wanted to kill him for his irresponsibility in getting engaged. 'He created a bad name for me. I am now second hand. Why won't he marry me?' I didn't want them to criticise him; on the other hand his behaviour caused me much trouble and pain. You know Cyprus and you can understand the gossip and the questions and the pity people feel for you. I dared to rent a flat to go and have a few moments of loneliness and rest away from the gossip. My parents begged me to keep it secret, which I did because I feel sad for giving them so much to worry about.

(U.S. 12,)

### 9.3 Divorced and Separated women

'.... You are not the only woman left in this world, are you?' (D.1)

"Eshiei tyi' allou portokalies pou kammnoun portakalia, my dear -

.... 'there are other orange trees to produce oranges (for me)' - the man said. (D.3)

This section deals with divorcees who are living alone, that is who did not remarry and who do not cohabit with anybody. Among my rural sample, the Horio women, there was no divorced woman but in Poli I included 14 separated or divorced women who belonged to different social classes.

All had been divorced between 1970 and 1980 apart from one woman (U D 13) who separated in 1963 and is still unmarried. Of these fourteen women, two divorced immediately after becoming refugees and four others soon after, mentioning the war as one of the factors that affected their decision to divorce or affected their husbands where the latter initiated the divorce.

Here I look closely at the different cause of divorce, the legal and economic aspects and its repercussions; that is, divorce procedures in the ecclesiastical courts and custody and maintenance problems in the secular district courts..

According to table 78:123 of the 1980 Demographic Report there were 128 new divorces in 1976, the crude divorce rate being 0.26 per 1,000 of the population, while in 1980, 155 divorces were granted making the crude divorce rate 0.30.

A gender breakdown in Table 6:50 of that Report shows that in 1976 the percentage of divorced or separated males who stayed unmarried was 0.4 while the percentage of females was 1.3. The roots of this imbalance are once again the product of patriarchal beliefs and practices: the sex role stereotyping and the expectations society has of a 'mature' woman.

I will add here some statistics from the 1970 Abstracts about specific categories of unmarried people for the whole of Cyprus to clarify further my argument that divorced, separated or widowed women find it very difficult to remarry. They are considered 'second hand goods,' of some age and a certain 'history,' besides which, they obviously fail to satisfy most of the desirability requirements<sup>(3)</sup>

and, in any case, they are rather less likely to conform to the subservient role allotted to them by the dominant sexual power relations. Out of a total of 1,662 divorced people recorded in 1980 only 502 were men. Further, out of a total of 2,046 separated people, (i.e. those who did not manage to get, or did not proceed for a divorce) only 683 were men while out of 25,543 widowed people who had remained single only 5,162 were men. In all three categories women outnumbered men. (I shall return to widowed women in section 9.4 below.) My explanation for this is that men can take the initiative through their match-makers to send proposals for marriage; they can marry younger women and their age or appearance is generally, not a problem; they have options and wide choices especially if they are wealthy or have social status (and wealth and prestige tend to produce each other.) Besides which, there is a shortage of marriageable men, due to the war and immigration. All this constitutes a powerful political position for men.

For women the possibilities are very few and as we have seen the initiative must be taken by somebody else on their behalf. The age-gap between her and a possible husband, if she is the older, must be a very few years (at most about 3) if she is not to be looked at with suspicion. The fact is that there are not many Cypriot women courageous enough (in the sense that it contradicts their own internalised identity and set of beliefs and expectations), to face that suspicion and gossip. Given that men are now a scarce resource in Cyprus, the chances of finding the right person to remarry after a divorce or death are very slight. Hence the fact that most men whose wives have left them, no matter how oppressive their behaviour, feel that, 'in the end she will come back to me! ..... what can she do?'

One divorced woman, an educationalist of 27 said:

As soon as I had taken the decision to divorce him I felt relieved. We were both at University, in the middle of our exams and, of course, I couldn't suggest separating homes as well. I waited until the end of the academic year. The most difficult period for me had passed. Before, I used to suffer when he came in late, when he beat me for trivial reasons, when he attacked me with the most cruel words. From the moment I made the decision I felt relieved. I started thinking of myself as a person. I was not available to him for anything he wanted anymore. He became furious and cruel, more cruel than before. He realised he was losing his servant. I left, so I was the guilty party. I could not proceed for a divorce; I had to wait for him to

do it. He found all our previous friends and begged them to contact me and get us back together. When he saw that I was firmly resisting he rang me to ask me to be just friends and go out together, as I might with any other man. He wanted to feel that I was still emotionally attached to him and that I wanted him. I became furious. He had no respect for my feelings. (U.D. 12)

This quotation shows the pain and anger that is involved in the process of deciding to divorce. It is significant that although she has suffered neglect, assault and battering, this woman could not proceed for divorce because she was 'the guilty party' having left first. The decision is usually taken at the moment when the 'glass overflowed - exeshilisen to potirin - a Cypriot saying indicating the 'last straw on the camel's back'. That is how a 31 year old professional describes it:

My mother-in-law said: 'We took you with the clothes you were wearing and we made you a lady, we gave you our name, we made you somebody.' I felt so humiliated and decided that this was the end. I wanted to divorce. I left home. (U.D.1)

What this shows is how the logical extension of the institution of marriage, producing women as a medium of exchange between families, is that in many cases women divorce not just from the husband but from the entire family of in laws. One could compare the way in which the WMPn is presented as an illustrative case

study in Chapter 2. She was alienated from her husband's family - rejected by them - when he had gone missing.

The two divorced women I have just quoted also commented on the fact that Cypriot society can accept divorce only if the conditions between the couple are very bad. For example, if the husband has left his family for another woman, if he is a drunkard, plays cards, or he is a criminal and has been put in prison. Worse still, it is expected that both divorced spouses should become bitter enemies. 'You must hate him since you decided to divorce'. so you are expected to insult each other, to gossip about him/her in front of people, to down-grade your ex-spouse and find excuses for yourself. (U.D.4) A 35 year old skilled worker and mother of one was forced to do that, which made her feel justified for what she said against him.

It was painful for me to speak about the bad side of his character. I loved him and tried not to speak about him but when I heard that he was insulting me behind my back I spoke as well. It was painful. (D.4)

In this way this divorced woman brought out the memories of her first year after her husband's decision to go off with his girlfriend and leave her



with their baby girl. She also recalled the advice given to her by some relatives and old friends: 'to forgive him; men are like that; they have girlfriends but they like their family life more'.

Some women from the upper middle classes had a somewhat easier experience. In most cases they have property, or shares in the companies and other businesses which provide them with the necessary income. Also because of their financial position and the prestige of their family name they can get away almost unscathed, as mentioned earlier about premarital relationships, from divorce or behaviour not in line with existing social rules.

I know I am lucky to have been born to educated, wealthy, parents in Nicosia. Their status and easy life gave me the chance to study, to travel, to have an easy life. But whatever I did during my adolescence, I kept it a secret from both my parents. I was one of the few girls who had affairs and some people admired my courage for which I felt proud. The same kind of life continued afterwards abroad during my studies and when I came back I had my 'history' and didn't care about anything people said. My marriage was not a very well considered decision. I felt trapped in it. Housework, guests, childcare and not much communication with my ex-husband. I wanted to leave and then the war came. Everything changed.... I waited.... In the end I took the decision... My father was against it. They all liked my ex-husband and kept reminding me that 'in my old age I was going to die alone, my child would desert me'. At the beginning I had to stay with my parents because I wasn't working. I had to hear their comments and anger especially if I dared invite male friends home. Then I got my own flat. I had my freedom. I have a boyfriend. My parents have accepted it now. They help me economically and by babysitting for me. (D.2)

Contrary to the above example, another woman had to face a lot of resentment and problems from her own family who thought more about their name and status in the Cypriot society than their daughter's unhappy life.

I didn't want to break the news about my life to my family because I feared their reaction. One day my sister and brother-in-law asked me about my husband's behaviour and I burst out and talked to them about his violent behaviour towards me and his verbal attacks against my family. They were shocked. He seemed a real gentleman to the outside world! They were kind enough to offer me hospitality if I was to separate. But my father could not accept my decision to divorce. On Christmas day during lunch when the whole extended family was present he told me very angrily that if I dare divorce and bring shame on the family the only place left for me was the convent up the hill where three nuns were living. I was always afraid of my father, his orders were undisputable and I used to obey everything almost unwillingly. This was the first time, at the age of 29, having gone through marriage, childbirth, the death of my first child, being left alone after his death, the second birth and beating that I decided to speak about the problems. I decided not to obey him any more. I felt that my parents were protecting their own interests in order not to bring shame on their family. They didn't see me as a person suffering so much in that marriage.

They felt sad when they heard that he was beating me. They were hoping that things could get better and were blaming me for not managing to change my husband ..... The woman with her patience can take the snake out of its hole not only to change her man. I was the black sheep of the family: I didn't manage to change my husband at all. He became worse and worse until I left. Life was very difficult in terms of social and economic pressures. I lived with my sister for some time, then with my parents and I was dependent on both. (D1)

Similar problems of independence and 'loneliness among many' were faced by another woman who said:

I had to go back to my father's. My mother died before I was married and my father was now living with his second wife. She was a policeman to me. At the age of 27 after 4 years of marriage, a teacher myself with studies and experience abroad, with all the problems that the procedure for a divorce brings to a Greek Cypriot woman, I had her to bother me. I left my father's house and went to stay with my brother and his family. I loved his children and wife and they cared about me a lot. Job requirements forced me to leave the town I was born in and where everybody knew me. I then started a life of my own - a flat, furniture, inviting friends in. I want to remarry and have a relationship that can last. I do not talk about my experiences to anyone unless I trust them very much. In Cyprus gossip comes back to you so 'heavy'. (D.12)

Is there a way round this major problem of loneliness?, most of these women asked. How could they divorce and have a relationship without offending their parents and relatives?

Some of our old friends continued to visit me after we separated. Some of our old male friends asked me to go out to a dance hall with them. It was very difficult to overcome my parents' moaning, my daughter's need to know where I was going and why. I decided in the end to go out with one male friend and at the very beginning of our relationship my ex-husband appeared to tell him that he still wanted me and that he wanted his family together. This comment made the new man in my life think that probably if he disappeared the family would be together again. I liked this man and I felt cheated because everything happened without me knowing anything about the conversation between the two men. I was determined to divorce. The divorce took some years to come through and during those years I could not have a relationship. I couldn't stand

my loneliness. I was always a lively person; tiny as you see me, (4) I used to dance a lot in Paris during my student years. I love human company and regretted the fact that I was alone. My parents suffered for me and I couldn't stand their complaints. They saw me as a failure and I couldn't see myself differently. (D.4)

This divorcee also discussed problems she faced over the issues of custody and maintenance. This has been a big issue for most divorcees where children were concerned. Children were a major problem in terms of upbringing, finance, the in-laws' reaction to them in that they were often seen by one family group as the offspring of the 'wrong party'. Another woman spoke about her own bitter experiences and conflicts over her own child. This 31-year-old woman, a university graduate, described her first contact with the Cypriot legal system as the worst experience in her life.

From the time I left home with the child, until the moment I had to go to court over his custody, I felt happy that I had decided to divorce and was finally free to think and decide about my life. The experience with the courts was a very hard one. Whatever the law says, which I think is very unjust for a mother, the whole process, which is full of delays - the lawyer's tricky way of earning more money - and my ex-husband's revengeful attitude, created a hell for me. He was playing with my maternal feelings and with my need to protect the young child. Although he didn't know anything about childcare and was not prepared to look after the child, he insisted on keeping him, as young as he was, with his old parents, so as to make me suffer. The law says that the father's consent is necessary for taking the child out of the country and I had to leave Cyprus to be able to survive. I had to take the child with me that year since he was very young and his father didn't know anything about looking

after him. I drove myself to the point of exhaustion in order to bring him up well. Once in my life I needed the support of the law to put right an injustice done to me by the traditional marriage rules. Instead of help I had to fight against old fashioned patriarchal rules institutionalised this time by our modern state. (D.1)

Another divorced professional woman of 33 who has a daughter from her marriage also speaks about turning to the courts to find justice and get her child from the father, who used his high social position to persuade the judge that he was the best person to look after the child. Although she felt bitter and embarrassed to talk about it, in the end she did speak:

My marriage was a failure from the beginning. But I became pregnant soon after my wedding day so I had to be patient and give birth to the child. She is a girl. He behaved very badly in many ways. I decided to leave the child with my parents when she became two years old and I went to the States to finish my studies. He took the child with him to his mother's and since then I see very little of her and they speak to her against me. She behaves very badly even when I see her. My ex-husband being in that financial and social position (upper middle class) plays with my feeling of love as a mother. I tried through the courts to get her back but I have failed until now because the fact that I went to finish my studies has been seen as deserting her (I left her with my mother who loved and cared for her more than I could do.) I will try again this year. (D.13)

In a similar way an urban 37 year old teacher described her experiences in her efforts to achieve reasonable maintenance for her 9 year old son.

He left me because I wasn't sexually attractive to him any more. My son was only six. My salary very small. We started building a house and all the debt (we borrowed a lot of money) was left to me. I had no chance to overcome my economic difficulties alone. I had to rely on my father. I went back to live with them. I made an oath to myself and my child that I would never agree to a divorce unless he compensated me for all the pain and loneliness I was going to suffer in Cyprus as a divorced woman with a child. It is the 5th year now since he left. We are facing continuous economic problems. We went to court many times. Although he is rich he doesn't give any money for his child. (D.3)

What about the position of the Church? The Cypriot Orthodox Church, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 above, sees marriage as a permanent relationship and not as an easily terminated partnership. It is one of the holy ceremonies and although divorce is granted if the grounds presented are valid and very serious, the whole procedure is very tedious, and time and money consuming, and it intensifies the conflict between the ex-couple. Especially in those cases where the divorce drags on for years, the conflict spreads to the two extended families and the worst is that it affects the children of the divorced as well as the two ex-spouses. For women it is worse because of the prejudices of the Cypriot Society.

A young working class skilled woman of 29 said to me:

The procedures for the divorce started four years and five months ago and I have just managed to get it. You can imagine what kind of a life I had during these four and a half years. (D.11)

Another divorced woman of 35, mother of a 9-year-old girl described her experience in managing to get alimony and benefits for her child.

Just on the steps of the Archbishopric where the courts worked I asked my lawyer what agreement had been made for the child, our 9 year old daughter. My ex-husband did not want to offer anything as maintenance, avoiding all his duties towards his child. As soon as I realised that, I started descending the steps of the Archbishopric to run away and told them 'OK, then I do not agree to the divorce. I will make it very difficult for him to get married again. I am going to write to the Bishop and explain everything. As soon as I said that my 'husband' changed his mind and asked my lawyer to write down £20 per month. Only then I consented and told the Bishop that I agreed to the divorce. In my case the delays that the Church made, helped me to get even that little bit of maintenance. (D.4)

#### 9.4 Problem women and the 1974 war

As explained above (Chapters 1, 2 and 3), Greek Cypriot society was shocked by the coup and the invasion of July 1984. Progress was brought almost to an abrupt halt: this stopped moves towards equality and development, and most women had to give up their acquired rights in the job market and the family, as was seen in Chapter 6. Unemployment and economic difficulties prevented families from sending their children abroad for University education, and this affected women much more than men. For example, a

family faced with great economic difficulties will be forced to effect a saving by interrupting the Gymnasium (Secondary) studies of the daughter and what's more will be forced to deprive her completely of any university studies. Even if the son has a lower record in his lessons than that of the daughter, the family will more easily interrupt the studies of the latter. The negative effects of the 1974 invasion on education and in consequence on the whole life of the Cypriot woman were very great and affected her position in the hierarchy of professions very severely.

Apart from this, the refugee Cypriot woman, uprooted from the normal life and neighbourhood which she had known, had to confront the misery of trying to survive in a tent, to bring up, feed and educate children by herself, all alone in cases where the husband was dead, missing or had emigrated abroad for work.

#### Refugee women as a problematic category

The next few pages will concentrate on the problems of refugee women, some of whom are not only refugees but also single, war widows or wives and fiancées of MPns. Their presence in this chapter is justified by the fact that some of the refugee women studied share



a problematic status over and above their refugee position. Both among my urban and rural sample there existed a number of refugee women married, single, war widows and wives of MPns. I present in this section those parts of the interviews where these women spoke about their experience of becoming refugees. Photographs formed an important source of information and when I took them during the interviews, women of all the above mentioned categories i.e. young and single refugees, widows, MPns or just married refugees were living with or next to each other.

Women and Children - together in the barracks

'Cruel - Cold winters and hot unbearable summers' - 1974-1980 in tents or simple houses barracks built by the family.

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Photograph 9.1

April 1979 in a 'corner' in Poli. (Photograph taken by this researcher during a preparatory meeting with refugee women, urban based at the time).

This section of the research gives quotations from their experiences during and after the war, as well as during the long-term struggle between 1974-1980 when people still hoped for justice and were looking forward to an early return to their homes.

The whole extended family gathered together during the difficult war times. In photograph 9.1. three mothers with young and teenage children are struggling together to bring them up under the worst possible home conditions in a refugee neighbourhood. Their husbands, as heads of households have been given land by the special governmental branch, and they have started, as a family to build their own new houses bit by bit. "We have a house of our own again" .... U.R.53 said with a sigh.

Most of them did not have the means to employ skilled builders, or even pay for plans by professional architects. They started building the small backyard complex, called 'Pisina'. These two or three rooms are usually built for aged parents, but refugees had to live in them for several years until they were able to build a proper house. By this time they will probably have to give it as a dowry to the first daughter.

Most of my refugee participants in both the rural and urban settings had similar hard experiences. I interviewed fifteen refugee women in Horio and another fifteen in Poli, most of them single. Two of them had experienced enclavement in the Turkish occupied area and they very much wanted to speak about 'those days' when fear about one's life, loss of close relatives pain and deprivation was their day to day experience.

Photograph 9.2 - The first few days after the ceasefire

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Source : P.I.O.

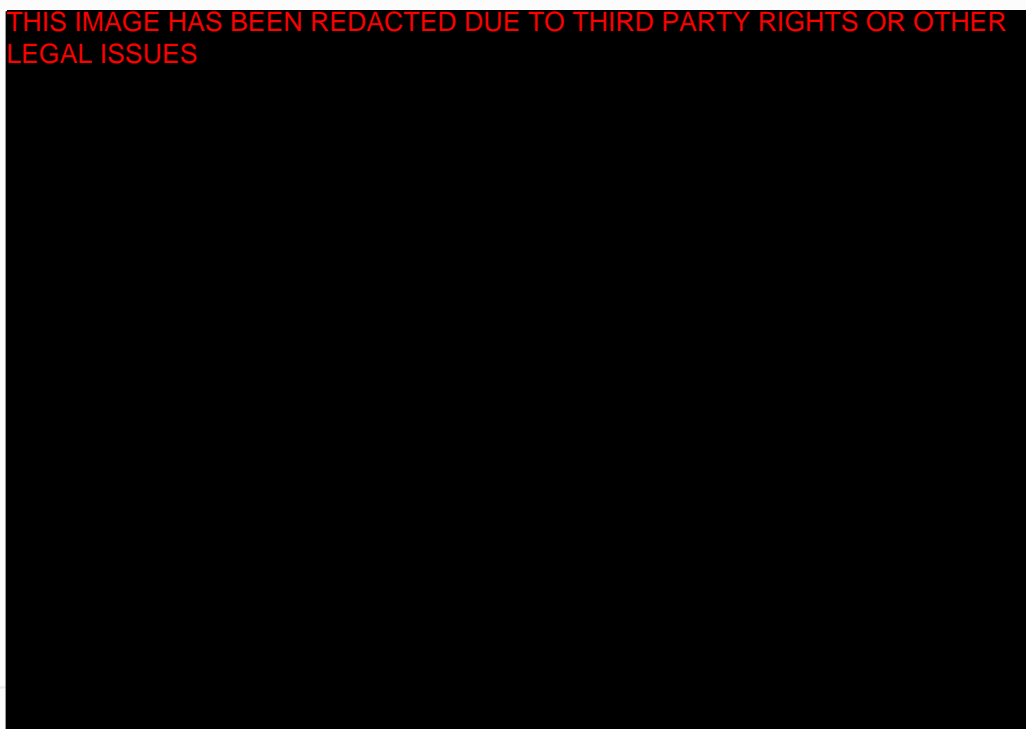
Women of all ages, children and old men were gathered into the church feeling afraid about their lives, hungry, thirsty, tired, waiting for the Red Cross to save them. Two of my participants were amongst these women and described their harsh experiences.

Days of agony passed and the United Nations delivered us safely to the Red Cross. They looked after us very well. Then my husband found us - he was worried about the girls and he took us to some relatives in Nicosia. We stayed there for a few weeks and then we came here where his parents gave us their home, old as it is, to stay in. (R.R.90)(S)

R.R.90 and her daughter R.R.91 - a 16 year old girl, were amongst these enclaved people, now refugees at Horio. Another refugee woman with the 'Heart grown bitter'('') sat in front of the camera.

Photograph 9.3 - The black-garbed grandmother stricken by the war looks after her grandchildren

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This refugee grandmother had to look after her grandchildren while both her daughters went out to paid work.

Before 1974, in our village they (her two daughters) used to look after their house, they had nice big houses that my husband I spent years and years of hard work to build. They had time to dress up their children and go out for a walk by the seaside. They were 'queens' in their homes, now they have been living in barracks for such a long time. I look after the children so that they can go out to work and bring their wages for all of us. We are trying to build again two small houses for them and two rooms for me on a piece of land the government gave us here. I feel so sorry for these children. I am so tired and old, I can't look after them well... I do my best. My daughters never worked for other people. If they had free time they used to work in our fields or with their husbands. Now, they are in the factory under the orders of that man..... What can we do? (R.R.14)

Photograph 9.4. - The grandmother, the mother and the daughter, three generations of women under one roof, involved in housework in the most primitive conditions.

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That is where we lived for the first three years after we were released from the Turks. My mother was always with us. She helped me a lot with the children and housework. My daughter also helped; being the eldest of the children she helped them all in the morning to get ready for school and also in the afternoon with their lessons. She has been my 'right' hand all these five difficult years. (U.R.7)

This refugee woman at the age of 38 looks as if she is 50. She found this picture taken by the Public Information Officer and gave it to me saying:

Take one if you want. I have two other copies; I will give my daughter one when she marries. God help us to find a good man for her. She does not have a dowry anymore. And write about our troubles; we want everybody to know how hard a life we had in the tents and the barracks especially in winter ... We will never forget the injustice done to us.

Another refugee woman (R.29), the mother of two, a daughter who is now a university graduate and a boy in the army for his compulsory service, said.

... It was a very big shock for me, the war I mean. Although I had my problems with my husband before, the fact that we had a reasonably high standard of living, the two children were growing up nicely and were very good students at school, gave me pleasure. I worry about the girl now, more than the boy. We wanted to marry her well. We had some good proposals before she finished studies and her house was ready. I decorated it so nicely, all the embroidery was by my mother and myself. My mother helped me at home. She lived with us and I had company all the time. I was used to my husband being out a lot. In 1974 we had just finished our daughter's house next to ours. She was going to finish her studies soon and be back. The invasion uprooted us completely. Our marital house was occupied, as well as our two villages of origin. We stayed with my brother's family in a strange village with a lot of other refugees for about two years. I didn't want to see people in the beginning. Everybody was bothering me. I realised that my nerves were very bad. I suffered from depression but I had to go out and work since we needed the money even more than before. (U.R.29)



Thirty refugee women were interviewed and all expressed their pain at losing their dowry homes and all that goes with it, and their anger towards politicians and diplomats who had created, or were not able to avoid this situation. Some even criticized their husbands for their political views before and after the invasion, which they thought were very disastrous for Cyprus as a whole. One of them a lively 65 year old refugee woman put it in these words:

We left these things (meaning politics and war) to men and we had faith in them. They were our men who talked and talked for hours in the coffee shops about this politician and that politician and the English and the Americans and the Turks... We used just to listen and we hoped for the best. (She shook her head, her voice became louder.) They made a mess... We (women) shouldn't leave everything to them. Men don't give birth and don't care much when killing people, when destroying homes. We know now what is peace and what is war. (R.R.89)

I have quoted this before but it distils so much, it is worth re-reading in this context. Above all, though, the pain that young dowryless single refugee women released through the interviews showed how much most of them had relied on their dowry for a good marriage and settlement for life. Their sense of their own worth as possible brides relied greatly on their family's name and the dowry prepared for them. The dowry has been lost and the status that their family enjoyed in their closely knit community before

the war has also been lost. Most of the uneducated single refugee women that I met concentrated their efforts on two jobs: factory work during the day and piece work or home help at night in order to rebuild a dowry somehow.

### War widows

This part of the research concentrates on war widows, presenting also an example of widowhood under 'normal' (i.e. non-war) conditions. The problematic nature of singleness, especially for young widows, is the main point to draw out of these interviews.

#### a) When bad luck strikes you young

A woman widowed at the age of 26 with a young boy on 5 in her hands recalls tragic moments of her experience in 1974.

My husband was one of the first to join the army after the call through the radio. Our boy was still in bed asleep and he kissed him goodbye with tears in his eyes "Look after him well", he told me. "I hope I will be back soon. If not, then stay near your family and my family. They will help you with the child." He was so good with me and the child "Keep this money on you and the keys of the car and ... remember me." These were the last words I heard from him. I lost my husband in the first round of fighting. A tremendous loss for me. My son is unhappy too. (Urban war widow)

The reaction of this woman to the loss of her beloved husband took a form of abnormality developed as normality, that is resignation from the world and concentration on the upbringing of her child. Then suddenly she decided to go out to work and, since her child was well adapted to his school situation, she felt well enough to join a charity organisation and be active in her neighbourhood again.

I interviewed two war widows in the urban setting, and two other widows, one of whose husband had died from illness and the other as the result of an accident. Among the category 'Married Urban Women' there were also 2 young widowed women who had remarried and who did not want to speak about their widowhood or their first marriage. In both cases the interviews concentrated on their present marital experiences as if the painful past had been wiped away with the new marriage. Another possibility could be the fact that in the rural setting there was only one family whose widow knew that the husband had died during the conflicts; I quote her later. The other 6 widows were over 50, widows of men who had married them when the women were very young: 14-17 years of age. Although the data gathered during the interviews and the participant observation are extensive from all the

widows, I do not expand a lot on the issue of widowhood and Greek Cypriot women because of the constraints of space in this thesis. I deliberately restrict myself to one quotation from each of the urban and rural war widows as well as two quotations from interviews with two orphan girls, so that I can cover briefly the experience of both the wife and the daughter when the head of the household dies.

The issue of widowhood has been the focus of some research in the West and has been generally commented upon as a more problematic situation for the woman than for the man.<sup>(8)</sup> Their reaction to the death of their husband, as Marris (1974) found, is one of speaking with love and affection and missing their lost husband very much even if the marriage had been an unhappy one. From the interviews and the participant observation that I did in Horio and Poli my informants did not react uniformly to their loss; there was a range of individual reactions, from resigning from the world to being very active and constructive and criticizing their husbands when specific questions about their relationship were put to them.

Soon after the war it was calculated (Social Services Report 1976) that 25% of the women whose husbands are dead, mainly refugee women, had young children and a large proportion of them were living in tents. Deprivation and psychological stress, adverse housing conditions, lack of adequate food, schooling and attention were the bad effects of the loss of the father on young daughters. I interviewed one family which had 3 daughters, 4 sons and a young mother. Here are abstracts, visual and written, of their immense pain and sense of loss.

Photograph 9.5 "Our father died" ... The widow and four of the seven children at the graveside

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All dressed in black from head to toe, a denial of life and the colours of the world, around the grave of the head of the family who was killed by the Turks. The pain and despair this woman and her children are feeling, is enormous. The family now is uprooted. Who is going to undertake the responsibility for marrying off these orphan girls, for educating the boys, for looking after the behaviour of the widow who is still a woman of 36?

The whole village cried at his death and were trying to comfort them during the first few weeks. But then.....

"Everybody has his own family, his own problems to try and solve.... I know I have to stand on my own two feet and help my children. I know that they need me more now. I do not have the strength. My life, my heart is empty, my body too weak, my mind unwilling to think "The Sun has set for me". I will leave everything to my father and brothers-in-law. I cannot do differently. I have only one brother and he is miles away, in England. My father is dead and my mother is so old".

(War Widow 2 from the rural study)

The gentle black-garbed woman ended in tears and her youngest boy and girl embraced her and tried to comfort her in front of me.

#### Authority of uncles when fathers die

#### Orphan girls are told:

Be careful...

"Think of your name...

You do not have your father any more..."

A 49 year old woman who is a grandmother now recalls her days of growing up in Horio as an orphan girl being looked after by her uncle J, her next male kin. Going back to her early childhood and adolescence in a rural setting in 1942 she says;

My father married twice because his first wife died while giving birth to her third child. He already had two daughters from that first marriage when he married my mother. She came from another village and was a bit older than his own girls when he brought her to his home. She then gave birth to two sons and myself. I was the youngest in the family and my father loved me. But he was strict with all of us three girls. He married off his first one to a rich old landowner from a nearby village who made her life unbearable because of his jealousy and meanness. Father died suddenly from an illness. Uncle S from next door took over the responsibility of looking after all of us, my mother included. He married my second sister off very quickly. The first proposal for my sister was a man twice her age but who had the important qualification uncle was searching for: 'He has so many donums of land, so many olive trees...' They got engaged and he took her to Poli to order new shoes for her (there were no ready-made shoes at that time). The shoe maker asked him in front of her. 'Is she your daughter, friend Michael?' ...my sister came back home and was ill, bad tempered and bitterly complaining: "everybody was calling me his daughter'. But she had to marry him. Uncle wouldn't hear of anything else. Nine months afterwards she died during her pregnancy because she developed a blood disease and she voluntarily didn't keep to her diet. She wanted to die. I was under similar pressures from my uncle to be modest in the way I spoke, the way I dressed, the way I moved around if I was out of the house. Once he asked me during summer not to wear short-sleeve dresses because they would be bad for my name. During the festival of Saint Marina I put on a new nice dress that I made myself with short sleeves. When I went, like everybody, to kiss the icon that he was holding up, being a member of the church committee, he was ready to kill me. He said slowly, "I will show you". Later on he shouted at me and my mother, and threatened that if I disobeyed him again he would marry me off the next day (U51 is a 49 year old woman with a grandchild to look after when her daughter goes to work.)

Another woman, a 27 year old mother of two boys, who was orphaned at the age of 10, recalls her experiences:

I became an orphan at the age of 10. My father died during an accident while ploughing the fields. Mother was left with 5 young children, me being the eldest, and a baby of 2 months old. She had no relative from her family of origin living near her. She was an orphan from both parents herself and came from another village. Her closest kin was her only brother to whom she turned for everything because he was educated. But he lived 15 miles away in another village. And he was married too. He had responsibilities towards his family. Mother and I had such a hard life. She was broken by the pain and the responsibilities. Father was self employed so we had no pension, no financial help from anybody. She worked very hard but still she wanted to send me to the secondary school and she had to pay for everything those years. My uncle paid my fees for the first three years. Then I remember a match maker, who was a relative brought a message, a proposal from my parents' in-laws. They didn't want any dowry, only me. Mother talked to uncle and her in-laws so as not to offend anybody, they all agreed that it was a promising case for me and invited their prospective in-laws and got us engaged. (R64)

#### 1.4 (ii) Wives and Fianceses of Missing Persons

This section is based on two months' fieldwork in Cyprus during July and August 1979. It started when I realized that the after effects of the war were borne more heavily by women than men. It is true that more men were killed than women, and more men lost more money and property than women did. The reality though, is that for almost every lost man, there was a woman dependent on him (as a wife, sister or old



mother) who was left unprotected in a society which creates many problems for women who do not have a man to define them as normal. Women from a working class background, especially peasant women, suffer more from every crisis and in the case of Cyprus they have been the most severely affected by the 1974 invasion. That is why Chapter 1 of this thesis gives a lot of space to a rural wife of a Missing Person from a poor family.

In July 1979, five and a half years after the Turkish invasion, the fate of 2,190 Greek Cypriots (ie 0.5 per cent of the population of the island) still remained unknown. There is irrefutable evidence that these persons were captured by the Turkish invading forces not only during, but also after the cessation of hostilities. The official attitude of the Turkish authorities however, is that no Greek Cypriot is detained as an undeclared "prisoner of war and that they have given back all the declared prisoners". The Turkish side has refused to allow investigation by Red Cross or United Nations Forces. Various initiatives were repulsed by them between 1974 and 1979. The latest one in 1979 did not succeed although there were some hopeful signs from the Turkish side. The U.N. expressed its regret for the non-implementation of its two previous resolutions and urged the immediate

establishment of the Investigations Body which would be in a position to function impartially, effectively and speedily. On May 18th and 19th 1979 talks between the two interested parties with the mediation of the Secretary General of the United Nations ended with a Report which states that one of the Parties was not prepared to appoint representatives to the Investigatory Body.

General on the U.N. operation in Cyprus; in his words,

The implementation of resolution "33/172" would depend in the instances on the readiness of both parties to appoint their representatives to the investigatory body as called for in paragraph 2 of the resolution. One of the parties was not prepared to do so. (9)

As a result of this the talks came to a standstill. The thousands of relatives of MPns still live with the agony of not knowing about the fate of their people. 'Are they dead or alive? Where are they kept?' And the immediate question that the wife of the missing person puts to herself is: for how long do I have to wait to be given an answer?

Photograph 9.6 wives and other relatives of  
Missing Persons during a demonstration in Nicosia.

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Source: P.1.0.

Uncertainty is really killing all these women. Once the dead are known to be dead then the living can start to live. But the Missing Persons of Cyprus are not yet declared dead. Since 1974, their wives and relatives - with a few exceptions only - have not been able to live their lives. During summer 1979 all WMPns interviewed lived with anxiety and insecurity, affected in every aspect of their lives by their husband's absence.

I considered their life experiences as the most tragic ones from all that the Cypriot population affected by the war suffered and devote to them the next few pages.

The fieldwork (a) Preliminary contacts

My fieldwork took place at the crucial period just after the high-level meeting of 18-19th May, 1970, when bitter disappointment followed the arousal of hope.

I started by contacting the special committee that was created to deal with the relatives of MPns. Official information given to me was that there were two branches of it - the governmental one that deals with the files and any information to be passed on to politicians for use in the U.N. discussions, and the other branch that deals with the families of MPns. The two always co-operate, but the people know mainly about the second, that is the 'Pancyprian Committee for the Undeclared Prisoners of War and the Relatives of Missing Persons' that started functioning in the Autumn of 1974, soon after the cease-fire, as a subgroup of the Cypriot Red Cross, in order to get more information about MPns, from relatives and released prisoners. Its staff worked on a voluntary basis and mainly came from those families which had a

close relative among the MPns. They received information, opened files for each MPn, organised demonstrations to various embassies, sent delegations abroad and published a newsletter. They intended to become a source of information for the relatives of MPns as well as a centre for positive action and a pressure group on the Cypriot government, the UN and the international community. During the first two years this committee was embraced by all Greek Cypriots with trust and hope and people willingly participated in all-night sittings outside embassies, meetings and demonstrations, protesting about the injustice done to their country and its citizens. By the time of the interviews it was the sixth year after the war and the committee had made no progress towards a solution of their problems either by managing to release MPns from Turkish imprisonment if they are alive, or by stating frankly that they accept the Turkish declarations; people have lost their confidence in its effectiveness. As already mentioned in Part I (Chapter 1) 27 married women and three women engaged to Missing Persons were interviewed. Also an official from the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical courts and two officials from the Department of Social Services, as well as the Secretary of the Pancyprian Committee for the Relatives of Missing Persons, were formally interviewed while many other contacts and informal meetings provided a wealth of experience and data.

As indicated above (Chapter 1) all the relevant material from government and U.N. sources and from the committee for relatives of MPns was studied carefully before I began the difficult task of the fieldwork.

In analysing the data I would like to focus attention on the sufferings of these women and try to show what aspects of their oppression they had internalized and whether or not they can see their own isolation through the social and religious barriers, which this particular society imposes on women. Do they accept their oppression? And if they do why?

b. Interviews: Thirty case studies.

I held a series of lengthy informal discussions with various people who had close relatives among the MPns around a variety of topics including family history, marriage, child bearing, economic position, their experience of the war, health, social services involvement and aspirations for thoughts about the future, in order to be able to plan the main areas of the actual interviews with wives of MPns. Then I interviewed 27 wives of MPns and three women who were engaged and about to marry at the time of the war, but whose fiances were lost. The actual interviews were

unstructured and taped and in most cases took place in the informant's home or place of work. Special consideration was given to the fact that the interviewee should feel comfortable. I felt strongly that a formal questionnaire would be inappropriate and limiting in collecting data that might lead to reveal their day-to-day realities. I made sure that enough scope was left for an open ended discussion, besides collecting certain basic/social and familial facts. The main points of the interviews are shown in Chapter 6.

Because of my own knowledge of both Cyprus and of the situation of being a single parent, a trusting atmosphere was created from the beginning in most cases - see introduction - and by the end of the visit I had to act more like a social worker comforting and giving advice than as an interviewer (10). The person interviewed was surrounded by her familiar environment where she felt free to speak without the fear that other people were hearing her views and would criticise or gossip. The sample consisted of women of various ages between 22 and 55 at the time that the interviews were conducted.

TABLE 9.1

Age range of wives and fiancés of MPns at the time of the interview.

Age Range	Number of Women
21 - 30	16
31 - 40	7
41 - 60	7
Total	30

Intentionally, more than two thirds of the sample were selected from the age group between 21 and 40, as this group of women face more problems because of their age and the possibility of considering a second marriage. I included 27 married and 3 engaged women, 20 of whom had children and 10 did not; 5 had had university education, 9 had secondary and 14 had had only elementary education. I also included in my sample two illiterate women. Another factor that I took into consideration was employment since 26 out of the 30 women had taken paid work in various jobs and



professions; 11 were working part-time and two said that they were 'only housewives'. Both had young children. I also considered the factor of their living conditions. 15 were living with one or both their parents, 6 were living near in-laws or other close relatives, 7 were living in their own dowry house but had a relative staying with them and 2 bitterly complained that they had nobody in this world with whom they could share their loneliness. Another factor that I had in mind was to include 'refugee and non refugee women'. I spread my sample more or less evenly, 16 refugee, 15 non refugee (See also Appendix 9.2 for more details of the sample).

c. Analysis of the data in context

In the background data I gathered a lot of material about the respondents' family of origin, her socialization and upbringing, her formal education as well as her betrothal, engagement period, any dowry problems, marriage ceremony and her life as a married woman up to the war. Then the person interviewed gave information about her experiences during the days of the war and the first two years after that; life was really difficult for the refugee wife of a MPn until she was given a house to settle down. This part of

the interview was in most cases followed by an outburst of tears because it reminded them of the fightings, the experience of bombing, killing, running away chased by the enemy's tanks and, of course, it reminded them of the day they lost their husbands. Abstracts from interviews follow under headings:

#### THAT WAS THE DAY...

"We were enclaved in Voni ( a village in the North of Nicosia) because we didn't manage to escape to the south before the Turkish tanks came. The soldiers separated the adult men and took them somewhere else. We, their wives, mothers and daughters didn't know where they were taken. Since then, the 15th August, 1974 I haven't seen my husband. Other women said that they heard shooting as soon as the men were separated from us and that he and all the others must have died. But then why have I seen his face in one of the pictures in the newspapers'. He was among other prisoners taken to Turkey. I saw him. It's him." (WMPn 24, a 41 year old woman, mother of 7 children).

#### IMMEDIATE HEALTH PROBLEMS

Emotional and psychological adjustment appeared to be an important area of difficulty which created serious health problems. Over half the group were taking or had taken tranquilizers and had experienced body weight fluctuations.

A 28 year old woman, married, without children said:

I went to the doctors for various symptoms and I often needed tablets for loss of appetite, for sleep, for my nerves, for my stomach and so on. I wasn't so keen on taking the tablets, but I saw the procedure as the only solution left to me. I feel like a volcano, bursting out from time to time." (MPn 10.)

And another woman of similar age and status without children, said:

"I am suffering from depression, agony, nerves. Before, I was a calm character, very shy and closed to myself. Now I don't want to mix with people. I feel as if my bleeding wound is wide open to them. Cypriot society is very cruel for women, especially for us single women. I suffer from many thoughts, but I do not revolt." (MPn 20)

#### LIFE BECAME MEANINGLESS

As mentioned above one of the topics discussed in the interview was the woman's physical and psychological health, seeking contact with doctors, children's problems, work and economic difficulties, relationship with in-laws and family of origin. The subject of divorce and marriage was a very delicate one because, even if the woman trusted me completely, she wouldn't trust herself to talk about her real needs and feelings. As WMPn 20 said:

Health is my biggest problem now because when I heard about my husband's possible death, I was so shocked that my nerves are very bad since then.

I cry very loudly and a lot and I can't concentrate easily. The doctors gave me a series of vitamins and tablets to make me go to sleep and I've become fat now, you see. People tell me not to follow all the instructions that the doctors give and, I don't know what to do. The doctor, of course, tells me to take my children and go out to get fresh air. The children, lately, are very naughty, very lively, shouting, quarrelling.....I can't cope with them. They see me crying most of the time."

Another woman said:

I have a very good relationship with my mother and father-in-law. They live in Larnaca in a house that their brother from Australia rented for them. They love my two children and every Sunday they visit us here. Sometimes they take them out. I asked them to stay with us, but they don't want to bother me as they say. I want their company. It's a relief for me to be with them. (WMPn 15)

The frequent feeling that life was meaningless was reported in 3/5 of the sample. The women's appearance was neglected, and their general attitude to life was that of a person who had had enough.

#### AWARENESS OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION

Two of my respondents, who were university graduates, discussed the political situation in Cyprus and international politics in general and considered themselves, and the other women belonging to the category of wives of MPns, to be the most oppressed citizens among the Cypriot population which as a whole

is the victim of international politics and the economic interests of imperialism. During most of the interviews, when the discussion came round to the point of any moral support or economic help by the special Pancyprrian committee for the relatives of MPns, disappointment was in most women's voices as if they had had enough of promises and empty words. At the beginning they gave all their time to the committee, participating in everything. But now they have lost hope and some of them do not even open the newsletter. As far as their relationship with the welfare services is concerned, 25 out of the 30 cases said that they do not want to see them as they were disappointed after the first visit. The social worker, according to one woman's account, was mainly interested in finding out about her economic condition, asking about furniture and a T.V. set and nothing about her emotional situation, relationship with her children or relatives. 'Were the social services so interested in reducing the amount of £12 per month that they were given by the Government?

This was their main complaint:

"We needed them in our loneliness, to advise us on serious matters to speak to others about our problems not to comment on how many belongings we had." (WMPn 17)

The woman who spoke like that had very few belongings even 5 years after the invasion and her becoming a refugee was a bitter experience because she had been wealthy before. Her husband had been a big landlord but had no cash. Immediately after the war, the government didn't treat the families of MPns as families that had lost their breadwinner for ever, so as to give them pension or economic help very quickly on a monthly basis. So this woman was deprived of basic material things that she was used to, in addition to losing the support and protection of her missing husband.

'GOING BACK TO YOUR FATHER'

The wives of Missing Persons became dependent on many other people instead of only one, their husband, as they were before he was lost. The woman's father, father-in-law and brothers or brothers-in-law have to take the responsibility for 'protecting' and looking after her and her children, for using in other words their authority, male presence and power to control her and her children's life.

Most of these women, especially those with young children, had to go back to their family of origin for economic reasons.

"That day, the 14th August, 1974, was a terrible day for me because the agony and the grief I suffered made me unable to move from my chair next to the radio that was reporting the fighting. There was nothing I could do other than cry and I was crying all day. My mother took over the total responsibility for the baby, 2 months old at the time.....I stayed close to my family, that is my parents, brothers, grandparents and my sister. All my relatives helped me but, of course, nobody could understand the depth of my loneliness, nobody could feel all my problems, living in a small village with so much gossiping around. My parents became stricter and stricter." (MPn 7)

Economic dependence either because the woman had a baby or small children and couldn't go out to work, or because they were physically and emotionally so weak that they couldn't go on with their job, had a disastrous effect on their decision-making and freedom of movement. Most of these women moved into their parents' house and let their own in order to get some money.

"I have only one sister who tried with her husband to help us, but of course, besides running here and there asking for our missing persons, she couldn't do anything else. I had to stay with my parents and let my house to get some money. The Red Cross Society asked me to help them on the telephone, so I worked and kept myself outside my father's home so as not to go mad. Then I went on a designer's course and, as soon as my daughter could go to a nursery, I joined my company, as they had reserved a job for me there. When they asked me what kind of a job I would prefer to do, I told them I needed something that could give me the chance to meet other people, to talk and have social activity. So three years after my husband was lost, I found myself back at work and I settled down in this routine." (MPn 12)

Her father became stricter towards her than before her marriage. He now feels responsible for his daughter's honour and wants to guard her from other males who may be offensive towards her. Her modest behaviour and good conduct is his principle; she must respect her parents, her husband's and her children's name, in other words, keep herself in isolation. 'People gossip easily about the wife of somebody who is absent from home.' Six out of the 30 women complained severely about their bad relationship with their fathers, which created troubles at home, tension in the children and a very unhappy atmosphere for all.

"About a year after he was lost and after having gone everywhere with my father-in-law to ask about him, my relationship with my in-laws started deteriorating. My house was almost finished by then and I moved in near my in-laws. They gave us the land, signed it, in fact, in both names. I have been here for 4 years now, facing problems every day. They now hate me and say that I took the land, the house and that I am not one of them anymore. My mother and sister-in-law insult me and my family whenever we happen to meet. We are neighbours and we don't have a 'hello' for each other.  
(MPn 19 - A 25 year old woman, without children.)

#### STATE 'SUPPORT' OR INTERVENTION

"Soon after the war, the social worker visited us in my parents' house and asked about my economic problems. Two months passed and then they decided to give us free tinned milk for the child and a few pounds in cash for my immediate needs." (MPn 7)



Those wives of MPns who were also refugees got free food; the others, for a period of time, had to depend on their kin, mainly their father or brother. Another woman discussed the issue of slow state reaction to their hard conditions of life and ended up commenting on the failure of the latest talks:

"No, I don't believe them anymore. They are all hypocrites and liars. They have so many families in agony for five whole years. The talks finished again with no result. I even don't want to hear the news."

In some cases these wives of MPns were called upon to assert themselves, to gain control of the family and to establish themselves as the rightful and legal representatives of their absent husband and their family. This worked against the traditional identity of the dependent wife and the legal side of the problems created great difficulty for them. These wives of MPns are treated as de-jure minors, since their husbands are not declared dead or lost for ever. They therefore do not have the rights of a widow, that is to the children's or husband's property. If the husband had money in the bank in his name, however important the needs of the family are, in 1979, the wife could not sign the papers to withdraw any of it for her children or herself.

Another example is the case where the family car was in the husband's name and the wife could not sell it nomatter how old or what troubles it created for her family. Five of the interviewed women decided to follow the procedure through the district courts and faced bitter guilty feelings.

"I have done or I am doing something wrong in having to deal with the judges and the courts. I have to beg for the court's humanitarian feelings to allow me to sell the old car and buy a new one, something which is in the family's interests." (WMPn 7)

Cypriot laws on property seek only to safeguard the rights of the children in terms of their father's property but in the case of the wives of MPns special provisions ought to have been made to eliminate the problems and establish women as legal representatives of the family. In one case, because of the special familistic character of the Cypriot society, the in-laws and the family of origin of the wife were in serious conflict over the husband's property and the wife was in the middle, suffering from both sides. Without wishing to make a comparative study I would like to refer here very briefly to the parallel studies of American wives of missing persons from the Vietnam war.<sup>(11)</sup> Such studies examined in detail the adjustment problems (behaviours) of these wives and children and how they coped with the situation.

The studies concluded that such families adapted to new responsibilities by a modification of family roles, accompanied by related anxieties, frustrations and feelings of insecurity engendered by the husband's absence.

The most difficult problem with which they had to cope with, was the feeling of extreme loneliness, making decisions alone, lack of suitable social outlets. Concern for the health of self and children was emphasized as an additional problem area.

In the American case, the wives, during the prolonged period of their husband's absence, involved themselves in a wide range of activities which for the most part appeared to enhance self-esteem and occupy them mentally and emotionally. In the case of Cyprus, there is not a wide range of activities, besides charity work, available to those wives of MPns who are not working. This includes many visits to monasteries and churches and asks them to become too involved in the rituals of the Greek Orthodox Church. The young women who were 2/3 of my sample got involved with religious activities, not because they felt the need, but because they felt obliged to accompany mothers or mothers-in-law to church ceremonies and exhausting all night prayers. It is arguable that they receive some

kind of comfort. As P Loizos commented (1980 oral communication), "It is probable they do get comfort. If sleeplessness is a problem, then getting tired by long hours, of being active in ritual would help tire them." That would be the only practical kind of comfort they would get from Church activities. I accept that there are people who take their religion very seriously. Very few of these women did. Deep in their heart they complained that God didn't help. Disappointment and disbelief in God succeeded what I would call the illusory comfort the Church and religious rituals offered them.

"At the beginning, I didn't want to go anywhere. I felt as if God had also deserted me. I was so disappointed about what had happened to Cyprus and myself. The priest and his wife used to come and press me to join their group every Sunday. Recently, I decided to go there with my sister. Yes, I feel better among other people in Church. Nobody will gossip about us if we go to church. It's not a social outing. I am younger than my sister and people may say something." (MPn 17, a 28 year old woman and mother of two.)

My informants complained fiercely about the social pressures on them and felt themselves almost imprisoned in their own homes by their own relatives and their children who, influenced by the whole atmosphere, felt insecure if their mother made a step away from them and the house. This happened in the case of WMPn 20 whose adolescent daughter was very opposed to her mother's outings and her using the lost father's car, which gave mother some freedom of movement.

child? How will his parents treat me since I am in crude terms a 'second hand' woman for them." (WMPn21, a 28 year-old University graduate, mother of one child.)

The representative of the church that I interviewed informally and anonymously said that only a few divorces were granted in those cases where the woman was already living with somebody else and had children from that relationship. The Church, as we have seen, prefers to remain in the background while exerting its influence and, on this issue, by not taking an open stance on how to help these WMPns, helps to strengthen restrictive attitudes towards these single women and their future marital status.

WHAT ABOUT ORGANISING TO STRUGGLE TOGETHER FOR THE  
COMMON GOOD?

When during the interviews the discussion came round to the need for an association for young wives of MPns to promote their own interests, all were ready to support it.

"Yes, I definitely want to join them." (WMPn 7 said)

Another woman said:

"It's good to create such an association, though I don't believe we will have much power in our hands. Still, I will support them both in the issue of property being in the husband's name and of divorce. As far as I am concerned I don't think that I will easily decide to marry because I have my child and think of his welfare more than anything else." (WMPn 4) a year old woman."

"I agree. We need such an Association. I'm not a very active person, especially now, but if other women start I'll support them and follow." (WMPn 10, a year old woman, mother of children.)

A similar attitude was shown by another woman:

"I must contact these women. I want to have the telephone number though I'm not energetic enough to do it by myself." (WMPn 20)

An older woman, aged 55 said,

"Yes, there are many young wives or girls who were engaged.....But the young women must be given another chance. I don't forget my husband, no, not at all, I'll never forget him. Maybe these young women will forget and start a new life again." (WMPn 26)

A young WMPn of 27 added:

"Even if I was engaged and he was lost, I would never consider marrying somebody else. I'll always remember him as my man. But I don't blame other young women who have different ideas." (WMPn 16)

#### EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

Contemporary Cypriots revived ancient Greek myths and stories from their modern history to remind Greek Cypriot women of their glorious past that they should

respect and honour. The Penelope myth is one of the best known Homeric stories. Penelope was the ever faithful, patient wife of Odysseus who waited according to the myth for her husband for 20 years to come back from the Trojan war. She found various excuses to keep the suitors away and continuously asked any visitors to Ithaca for news about Odysseus. Even if these visitors gave her disappointing information about his departure from Troy and his troubles at sea she did not lose hope. She continued to expect him to come back and her endurance and patience became a shining example to follow in the Greek world. Greek teachers stress the factor of her patience and Greek mothers comment on Penelopes' devotion to her husband. In post-war Cyprus this myth was revived and explicitly or implicitly reminded the wives of Missing Persons that they had a glorious heritage to follow; they should live up to it however difficult it might be for them. Some of my informants remembered also the story of Souliotisses - another example of heroism related to keeping up the honour of Greek men and the Greek Nation by an act of self-sacrifice by Greek women. These women from Souli, a mountainous area of Epiros, preferred to kill themselves to avoid a life of servitude and dishonour under Ali Pasha. Such stories told repeatedly with

their moral lesson stressed, link up with my argument that in times of crisis women are asked to give up even their right to life in order to keep up with the moral values set up by the leaders of the nations.

All the women who referred to either of these stories showed their anxiety and distress in case they were seen to be talking or acting in contravention of these traditional, Hellenic ideals. The relevance of these myths to their own situation in 1979 was that even if there was no progress in the efforts of the Cypriot Government, the issue of missing persons, the young women who just experienced marriage or engagement ought to wait and remain in limbo - neither married nor unmarried - indefinitely.

"How is M (a 28 year old lawyer at the time of fieldwork) ..... I asked one of the male relatives of her missing husband in 1982. "She is OK. She is the first to ask for a divorce from the Church. Did you know that?"

He answered in an angry and very disapproving manner, as if this young woman WMPn, by divorcing in 1982 in order to live her own life, after 8 years of waiting in pain and agony had insulted his family. His comment was very bitter and critical towards a person who no longer belonged to his family. He could now criticize her as much as he wanted since she was not one of them any more.



## 9 .5 CONCLUSION

What I have been discussing with the 'problem women' is not a simple lack, but that this lack (lack of the husband-protector) under specific conditions calls attention to a general series of social constraints and lacks.

To talk of honour and prestige in this context is to talk of oppression and discrimination against all women. This does not make the suffering and pain of the wives of missing persons, widows, divorced, separated, or single women less real: the point is that there is as yet no available identity for them to assume - the more so for the rural women who are policed very effectively by the village gossip system. The idea of 'timia gynaika' the honest woman, which implies a self image based on external criteria as well as an internalised guilt, was the biggest underlying issue in all interviews. None of these women would like to be called - shameless - dishonest and they all knew that in Cyprus people are quick to call a woman 'adiantropi' - dishonest. They should therefore follow the teachings of the Helleno-Christian ideals.

As a Greek Cypriot single woman writer put it in 1981:

.....Στέκομαι εκεί που μ'έρριξε  
η ανάγκη του ελληνοχριστιανικού μύθου.

.....  
Στη θέση του ωμού θανάτου.....

..... (PEMHELINA 1981).

"I stand there where the demands of the Helleno Christian myth have cast me. Just there where cold-blooded death of my personality is waiting..."

Fear of not keeping up the standards of honour set by society prevents most of these 'problem' women from overcoming loneliness and leading fulfilling lives.

I have been describing the suffering and pain as an effect of a lack of a husband. It was implied that this was an abnormal situation, that is that the pain and suffering comes from being not normal and that the normal and everyday is acceptable. But the normal also entails pain and denial, albeit in a less extreme form; thus a simple restoration of the old forms will not help. This case study of problem women illustrates clearly that the life of Cypriot women in general is not an easy life. As Rebelina (1981) argues, some people are born under the worst possible

conditions on an iceberg or in the desert, and are left there to struggle and survive. They have to learn all the necessary skills by themselves. If these people are women born in contemporary Cyprus then the struggle is even harder because no woman in Cyprus can exist alone. Only if she is recognised by or identifies with the patriarchal law can she exist.

The second principal point of this chapter is that religion is part of the secular, personal and collective identity: "I am (being) a Greek Orthodox Cypriot woman. As a WMPn, or a widow or a single refugee woman I have to behave according to the teachings of the Church." Through religion certain values and rituals set examples for the ways women have to live. In this respect, women are a kind of moral litmus test of the authenticity of the given culture; they can be pointed out and observed to demonstrate that the old values survive: customs, tradition, religion, ritual and folklore are all summed up in the way women should behave - in other words in 'our way of life', the nation's way of life. That is to say, in Cyprus today these women are an expression of social values. To go against this dense material substratum of norms is almost to challenge the notion of being human, to become monstrous, unreal, animal-like or more rarely, to become an angel, holy, godlike, special: hence the "Penelope" myth.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 9

1. Women are identified as property and with property, as the articles in the book ed. by R. Hirshon 'WOMEN AND PROPERTY WOMEN AS PROPERTY, Oxford 1982, demonstrate by empirical case studies.
2. Unfortunately I was not able to find the absolute number of single women in the Cypriot population as a whole because the last censuses did not collect information about single women. In my two sub-samples, the rural and the urban, I included 21 and 20 single women respectively.
3. The requirements from a woman in order to be a desirable bride give priority to virginity, good name, and chastity, all characteristics that do not apply to divorced women
4. She was very short, thin, from rural origin and extremely open minded, - not a usual characteristic of women from her origin and class.
5. R.R 90 is the abbreviation for Rural Refugee no. 90, in this case a woman with much wisdom and pain coming out of the description she gave of her life.
6. 'The Heart Grown Bitter' is the title of P. Loizos chronicle of Cypriot refugees. It is a phrase applicable to my refugee participants; bitterness was coming out of their descriptions of the immense pain created by the 1974 invasion.
7. U.R.7 came from the area where the Turks landed and she recalled very hard experiences. One of her major worries after survival was the fact that she had her two teenage girls with her.
8. See also Mary Stot 'Beyond Loneliness', reprinted from the Guardian in the O.U. Reader, textbook on 'Women's Experience 1982.
9. The Secretary General of the UN discussed the UN resolution 33/172 extensively.
10. This need of the WMPns to speak to me in confidence about their life and thoughts for the future, shows the women's isolation and their feeling that not many people, whether family or not, understand their problems.

10. Peig Sayer (an Irish writer of the 19th century), as quoted in M.Henderson (1979) describes the life of rural Irish women in more or less similar words to those used by my participants.

11. 'Sogambros', the groom who came into the house of his wife's parents and stayed with them instead of bulding his own house to take his bride to, was common in Horio in the case of all the men who married the last daughter of a family; although it was quite common, the term had its bad connotation when used publicly.

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#### PART IV CONCLUSIONS

This is the last part of the thesis and attempts to draw together the various threads of my findings and my arguments.

Chapter 10 discusses the hierarchical sexual structure of Cypriot society and its relationship to studies of women in other Mediterranean and Western countries where feminist research has been developing for some decades now and where there is an ongoing debate about social change and women's position in society.

Chapter 11 is a postscript and aims to inform the reader about the most important political and social events that have taken place, since 1980 when my fieldwork ended, in Cyprus itself and in those countries like Greece which play an important role in the life of Greek Cypriot women.

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Regulating women's social identities in contemporary Cyprus
- 10.2 The major findings of this research
- 10.3 Women, the family, the state and the law.
- 10.4 Feminist research and Greek Cypriot women
- 10.5 Concluding remarks

10.1 Regulating women's social identities in contemporary Cyprus

This thesis has been an exploration of the historical relations between the sexes in Greek Cypriot society and its consequences for women, both urban and rural. The significance, in this context, of the 1974 war was shown in a detailed analysis of the problems faced by both wives and fiancées of missing persons and by a brief description of the effects of the war on other groups of women. It was argued in Chapter 9 that in times of crisis like the 1974 war, when Cyprus was invaded, women not only shared the drama but had in fact to face more continuing and specific pain and arguably bore a heavier share of the misfortunes of that crisis. The women's own words are used to demonstrate how unprotected single women function as the 'centre piece' by which social control over all other women is maintained: they are used as an example to control the others who may become aware of the functioning of the strong patriarchal system and who may venture to criticise or even revolt against it. The problems faced by the wives of missing persons or divorced women are made clear in order to show the validity of the normal patterning of women's lives under the existing male power relations.

Cypriot society until 1974 was, like most other developing Mediterranean societies seemingly at peace with itself; it had its own norms and operated by the

exploitation of women in the traditional manner. The life of a Greek Cypriot woman was regulated very much by religious and state laws, and also by general norms which clearly set out the behaviour expected of women. One basic and very powerful rule of this kind was that every Cypriot woman must marry; she was granted no other future. Failure to marry prevented her from participating even partially in social life, assigning to her, in fact, a peripheral role in the extended family and in society. As a married person the Greek Cypriot rural woman fulfilled her expected role as a reproducer, and shared in agricultural and house-based production, but these contributions were not formally recognised.

#### 10.2 The major findings of this research.

The study began with extracts from interviews with women, who tried in their own words to describe and in some cases to reflect upon and analyse their life experiences. The first extract was from an interview with the wife of a missing person, and conveyed in a few pages the continuous stress under which all these women live; through her rich description I believe she acted as the illustrative example of life experiences of a considerable number of Greek Cypriot contemporary women. Although the starting point of the thesis was the problem of the WMPns brought into the open by the 1974 war, I tried to show that other, 'ordinary' supposedly

unproblematic and normal Greek Cypriot women, are affected by the patterns of discrimination and control that the special cases of 'Women without men' suffer in a more obvious way.

The Greek Orthodox Church and the Cypriot state were examined in various contexts, in order to offer an outline of the origins and development of those relations which regulate the social identities of the women who participated in this research. I tried to show how institutions and ideologies mesh together with rituals and customs in order to control women effectively through their hegemonic as well as their institutionalised power. The brief sketch of the history of Cyprus was designed to provide background information only for the period under review; in a few condensed pages I presented important political, historical and social events of unique importance for their effects on the life of the island and its women. As argued earlier, reference to the historical facts is essential in accounting for a widespread ideology, in this case patriarchal ideology and the legislation stemming from it. The historical outline served as a filter through which the specific references to the involvement of church in the private life of Greek Cypriot women could be seen. The particular historical events selected were intended to give an indication of my own evaluation in allowing priority to certain events and of course in

particular to the 1974 war. I dealt with the Church as a formal institution, with its ideologies, images and practices. Institutions and practices, ideologies and images that relate to women were discussed at some length in the thesis. Marriage and the dowry contract were used as illustrative examples of the power of the Church on women's lives. Besides showing the hegemonic presence of the Church in special ceremonies I discussed in more detail various manifestations of the presence of religious doctrine in everyday life, with particular reference to forms of family life in general, and also the reworking of custom and folklore. The secular power of the Church and its negative capacities to block initiatives for change in the areas of politics, education and social life showed that it is invalid to separate Church and public life since the Church is as pervasive as the state, from which it simply cannot be divided.

It was argued that the overall pattern of rules, regulations, and courts applicable to Greek Cypriots is complex. Canon and secular law in operation show the division of powers between Church and State and their tacit agreement not to interfere in each other's territory. An important point is the way that all law makes a claim beyond the actual body of legal texts and institutions. Law is seen as proper and natural, justified by religion and also as rationalised common

sense as 'the law of the land'. Thus it is bound up with being a Greek Cypriot. This claim to authenticity in expressing Greek Cypriotness through Canon and secular law gives law an enormous majesty and power. Injustice is done to Greek Cypriot women not only because the content of the law is oppressive, but also because Ecclesiastical courts operate in a very undemocratic way. No woman can be a member of such a court since males are appointed as priests then as bishops who can sit in ecclesiastical courts. This, it was argued, is a further political illustration of the functioning of patriarchal relations in Cyprus.

Before starting this research I was aware of existing contradictions and social inconsistencies in human actions and institutions. As the fieldwork in Cyprus progressed I became more and more aware of the inconsistencies between what a person believes and what he or she practices in everyday life both rural and urban in contemporary Cyprus. I discovered that these contradictions and inconsistencies existed more among urban women than among their rural counterparts. For example the participation of urban women in work did not facilitate their introduction into active political life as one might have anticipated; but it did gain for them knowledge and experience as well as some, albeit limited, financial freedom - a contributing factor in freedom of movement.

I attempted to validate the above comments through the findings of my fieldwork. Here I would like to stress that, although there are regional differences, (a constant feature of most societies, so that one cannot generalize without some falsification) in the early parts of the thesis (parts I & III) I offered some generalizations about Cypriot women's position which were supported by the material in Chapters 5, 7, 8 and 9. The national overview was derived from the statistical data selected from governmental, UN and other international reports on the social structure of Cyprus. The demographic outline was supplemented by my analyses of the data gathered in Horio and Poli. The 94 rural women all of whom participated in productive work in and outside the home stated either, that they were dissatisfied with their lives but, 'what could they do?' or that they saw nothing wrong since 'God wanted things that way.'

The urban study dealt with the life experiences of 98 urban women from Poli. Their situations were compared with the situations of rural women and the traditional - modern continuum was discussed as an example of the continuing strength of oppressive ideologies, even in situations where structural changes are obviously taking place. The apparent autonomy and equality enjoyed by predominantly middle class educated urban women, is essentially illusory. These women are accorded formal



equality and some autonomy but this is denied in the reality of their family life. The complex of traditional values, modern practices and unchanging sexual power relations, produces, not increased freedom for women, but conflict, contradiction and continued frustration. My investigation in Poli showed that although these 98 urban women were in most cases considered generally privileged compared with their rural sisters, they still faced discrimination in their family life. Urban women are also positioned by their gender, to whatever social class they belong, and are expected to follow a set of rules and apply them in all spheres of their life. The status of being married is for urban women, as it is for rural women, the only acceptable condition for them to aspire to, marriage being considered the main source of happiness. Marriage is continuously presented as the only alternative to loneliness, or to a marginalised life; thus marriage is the ideal which completes and validates life.

The disguised form in which the dowry system works in the towns does not liberate women from the complex way in which they perceive themselves as inferior to the man who asks them to marry him. The study of the rural and urban women revealed how pervasive is the ideology of male dominance. The fact that patriarchy works in Horio by depriving a daughter of secondary education in order to save up for her dowry house, and in Poli by asking

her to open an account and save up all her salary for the flat (her dowry), in most cases as soon as she starts earning, is translated here as a common experience of loss of personal freedom and loss of the ability to make personal choices. The few cases of upper middle class urban women whose financial position and parents' social status give them the security of modelling their lives according to western examples, only prove the argument that patriarchy, social class, religion and political power have joined forces to prevent real and widespread change that could reach every Cypriot home.

The life of the 'problem woman' was presented as an illustrative example of the way patriarchy works in Cyprus; perhaps in the near future, if and when this study becomes available in Greek, it might awaken Cypriot women, when they realise that the 'unique' position of the WMPns is not so unique, once they reflect on their own lives. The findings of my fieldwork amongst 'problem women' may be summarised as follows:

The experience of 1974 was a traumatic one for Cypriot society as a whole. I have tried to make sense of the resulting special 'limbo' situation in which the wives and fiancées of missing persons so suddenly found themselves as a result of the war. I started with this particular problem in mind and explored its

ramifications in terms of the way this special situation has affected the behaviour patterns of these women: how are they bringing up their children and how do they relate to other women? The 'bomb' of the war was practically thrown into their own home and has changed their status from 'married-protected' to 'single-unprotected' women. The Church and the State, as the main institutions involved in familial issues used various mechanisms to prevent meaningful discussions about restoring these women to society. They also reacted in a similar way in the case of raped women. This is very significant for the argument of this research, because it shows how both these powerful institutions have to pretend that the problem does not exist. The Church and the State reacted in traditional ways in dealing with a problem by ignoring it. They gave no security to raped women who were left with memories of the past and the experience of the war working against their present reality.

Although the 1974 war was destructive and has left many unresolved problems, however, I have shown that, whilst it is a necessary part of my explanation, it is not, of itself, a sufficiently comprehensive explanation for the situation of Greek Cypriot women. It is argued that '1974' has brought radical social change, but that the changes up to 1980 were superficial with respect to the positioning of women. My research shows that the

traditional social structures continue to endure even through major upheavals.

It was for this reason that I outlined in Part II, two broader contexts- that of the history of Cyprus, and of the Greek Orthodox Church. Only when these general ideological and institutional structures are understood historically can adequate sense be made of the statements and experiences of the rural and urban women-both 'normal' and 'problem' women. In this way I have interrelated the experiences of all Greek Cypriot women. The 'abnormality' of the 'problem' women is not different or new as is claimed, but is a more extreme case of a general situation. This neither denies the intensity of such women's suffering and (particularly for 'problem' women in rural areas) their relative isolation nor does it alter the correctness of demands that the state and Church should alleviate their distress. But their greater 'visibility' - like the strategy of using the 1974 war as the explanation of them as a problem-should not distract us from those features of their social situation which they share with all Greek Cypriot women resident in Cyprus. Indeed, as I have indicated in various places (1) some aspects of their situation are common to all women in Cyprus.

I would like to argue that we need to re-interpret and locate the problem and its cause within wider and

historical contexts. It is not women (or the war) that are the problem (or the cause) but a specific form of patriarchal social structure regulated by the state, implemented by the church and supported by custom and tradition. This particular patriarchal structure establishes one central identity for the Greek Cypriot woman - that of a married woman. As wife and mother she remains in part under the authority of her father (or the eldest member in her family, such as a brother or an uncle) and acquires new patriarchs in her husband and her husband's father. The families in a wider sense, including older women, also exercise 'social' oversight of the woman, more so in rural areas than in the towns.

These familial structures of patriarchy (the hidden side of the 'extended' family) are regulated and strengthened by the powers and doctrines of the Greek Orthodox Church, which has a central place in the construction and perpetuation of women's social identities- their place and 'proper duties'. The power of the local priest, again, particularly in rural areas, is worth stressing once more. Rather than challenging or transforming such powers, the secular state and official policies have accepted such church powers as a 'fact' of 'modern' life, as part of the authentic Greek Cypriot national identity. I drew attention to the manifest contradictions between statements of equality in constitutional law and the actual social practices that continue to subordinate women.

I have shown that it is equally false to claim that modernisation and industrialisation necessarily improve women's situation, although such changes may offer the potential for women to recognise their problems and facilitate their organisation as women, trying to change their situation for themselves. Of course, this situation is itself changing, partly as an often delayed response to changes beyond Cyprus itself (for example, the introduction of civil marriage in Greece) and partly because of international programmes and investigations, such as the ILO programme on women led by W. J. House, (2) that make the situation in Cyprus visible.

I have argued that the ways in which women are situated are not only, nor even mainly, the result of explicit coercion by particular men or institutions. Social norms operate more powerfully and decisively through 'moral regulation' (3) establishing images and practices as to what is proper, expected and correct orientation and behaviour. Women, despite the lack of control over their lives, come to see themselves in terms of their normalisation as inferior. This becomes part of their subjectivity, expressed in their language and their way of speaking and writing (See Rebelina 1981, Tenezi 1982). The ways women identify themselves socially - how they feel they have to live their lives - constitute a more pervasive and more powerful set of controls than those of coercive institutions and

practices. The discourses of Church and State are matched by, are echoed by, much 'ordinary talk' about women (and men). The materiality of such common sense assumptions is illustrated in the work of Elisabeth Croll (4) in her studies of the limits to women's liberation in the People's Republic of China, which for ten years made it a central feature of its construction of socialism.

### 10.3 Women, State, the family and the law

I turn now from the empirical findings of my own research to a brief consideration of the theoretical thinking in the area of feminist research, as a preliminary to addressing the question of how the general theory can be applied to, and indeed help to alleviate, the position of Greek Cypriot women.

One of the most important focusses for research on women has always been the family; it has been seen as a crucial socializing institution and as the major source of women's oppression. We may extend the views of some researchers (5) and explain how the family and the educational system are regulated by modern states to maintain and reproduce the social and economic status quo, especially the social divisions of labour including that based on gender. The family's primary function is here seen as that of an agency of socialization and the reproduction of the values and aims of the society in

the consciousness and practices of the individual members. Women and men as members of families, though for different reasons, actively cooperate in reproducing the ideology surrounding sexual roles.

Some feminist writers have taken the position that all women are perceived as potential wives and are under tremendous social and financial pressure to marry.(6) These pressures ensure that women are coerced into a relationship with a male partner, and into being or behaving as wives even when they are not. As wives, they all share the same class position which is a labour relationship vis a vis their male partner.(7) Duties performed by a wife and her standard of living depend on her husband's class location and how much money he decides to give her if she is not in paid work. Barret and McIntosh (8) criticised this thesis and pointed out that to perceive women as a specific class in their own right fails to take account of the fact that some women are separated from others by objective class interests, which structure education and job opportunities, and not solely by consciousness.

Feminist research has examined in some detail the interrelationship between the forces of patriarchy and capitalism and the effects of such a relationship on women's position. The link between all these is a complex one and none of the explorations, whether that



in Britain of Barret and McIntosh, for example, or that in France by Delphy and Leonard, is capable, if taken by itself of offering an adequate explanation of women's oppression. Whilst it may be helpful and probably necessary to give primacy to production relations, it is nevertheless of equal importance to hold on to a concept such as the relations of human reproduction and the hidden labour relations within marriage. M. Henderson (9) examines the nature of the interdependence between capitalism and patriarchy in an attempt to counter this tendency to view matters in terms of dichotomies and to regard power as deriving either from one's economic class position or from one's gender identity.

The continuing centrality of the family form (legally regulated, religiously legitimated) (10) contributes one major network of subordinating relations for women. The longstanding identification of family life and domesticity with the private, personal and affective (11) world continues to conceal both this subordination and the degree to which the so called 'private world' is socially constructed and regulated by public institutions: that it is, in fact, a political world. The general trend in feminist research has been to move from monocausal explanations (for example in terms of the economy) and to stress the interlocking of patriarchal practices, institutions and ideologies in all areas of women's lives.(12) In my analysis of Greek

Cypriot women it has thus been necessary to understand the construction of women themselves, and to learn from their experience why, how and to what extent they themselves accept the legitimacy of patriarchy.

There has also been a growing attention in the relevant literature to the different ways in which women are constituted by law. The State constitutes women primarily not as persons but as wives and mothers who bear and rear children, the future workers and citizens of the state: not only as reproducers of the labour force and/or of the future subjects of the State, but as reproducers biologically and ideologically of the national collective. As Rendel says:

The family is politically important for other reasons too. It has been perceived as a miniature state... The husband/father governed the family, disciplined its members, provided for them and represented them to the outside world. Such ideas have remained alive in the twentieth century. Many constitutional documents describe the family as the fundamental unit or group in society. Comparable provisions are to be found in a number of international documents, both of UN organisations and of regional organisations. This is not to suggest that the family is seen only as a political unit and clearly there are good reasons of safeguarding the rights of individuals to join together to found a family. I am concerned to establish that the family is also a political unit, and is, in this century and at the present time, recognised as such by those engaged in politics.

In much sociological work on the family and in some feminist writing there are limitations because a great deal of the sociology of the family, surprisingly ignores relationships within families and the

consequences of these for the social lives of members. The family is treated as a unit and analysed from the point of view of its place in a stratified society, its child-rearing practices or perhaps its divorce potential. What is of interest here is the extent to which the Cypriot social structure rejects in a subtle way the application of universalist principles of equality to its female citizens, in spite of the fact that the Constitution of 1960 is opposed to any discrimination on the grounds of gender.

Christine Delphy (1977) (13) discusses how agents of social control such as lawyers, the police and social workers can help to direct family relationships along particular lines. Such legal officials are, in practical terms, reproducing a particular ideological view of family life with ideal roles clearly differentiated along gender lines.

As Caldwell (1982 (b):1) puts it:

In and through a variety of institutional and discursive practices, 'the state' seems intent on supporting a particular family form and a particular positioning of women within it.

This ideal reinforces those portrayed in the media, romantic songs, films and advertising, but it is not a neutral ideal: it is one in which women are socially subordinate. Obviously empirical research is necessary to show how far this ideal is experienced as coercive by

women and men and how far its features are reproduced in actual social relationships.

Poulantzas (1978) suggests that one of the ways in which the legal apparatus of the State operates is to define people in terms of individual rights and duties which the legal system safeguards. This inhibits people's ability to define their rights in different terms and along social lines, for example by class, gender, ethnic or other differentiations. In the case of family law, I would like to suggest that in employing legal rights and duties in the regulation of family relationships, the legal system is indeed isolating people, women in particular, and inhibiting their ability to redefine family life along different lines. One example would be the wives of MPns who, according to Cypriot law were not given the status of a 'widow' vis a vis their husband's property, and struggled as individuals, first with themselves and then with the courts. Two further points follow from the preceeding observations. Firstly, legislation is not a powerful force for social change. The rate of achieving gender equality is slow and the law always lags behind social change. The law cannot be conceived as the sole instrument of reform which will lead to gender equality. We should see the law as an instrument which can be moderately helpful but which still cannot confront deeper norms and social standards. Secondly, the law remedies some social injustices

perpetrated by one individual, or group of individuals, against another, by punishing the guilty person or group, but rarely manages to prevent the evil. It resembles many State medical practices in being corrective and not preventative.

The specific terms of the legal system also matter here. Eekelaar (1971), as quoted in Leonard-Barker (1979) argues that:

English practice... has been to refrain from formulating general principles as to how families should be managed. It has preferred to wait until something has gone wrong and then to provide some form of remedy for the aggrieved party.

Nevertheless, in the area of social security law and practice, it has been argued that the legal system does enforce an implicit view of the family, especially the notion of the economic dependence of the female on the male, which is even forced on people who are not married but cohabit. Sociology, especially functional sociology, has developed a particular ideological view of the family in society, with little attempt, at least until recently, to trace its history. This nuclear family is not merely a bourgeois ideal. It is projected as a social norm potentially valid for all of society; and of course not only by sociologists: such a norm is also portrayed in popular literature and discussed in the media. Michelle Barrett (1980:235) examines the workings of the law, the judiciary and the penal system,

criticises the operations and actions of the police force in cases of marital violence, rape, etc., and accuses them of interpreting the law with particular assumptions about gender. She adds:

The law itself encodes fundamental assumptions about gender division and it is salutary to consider how recently it is that women have been recognised as legal subjects in their own rights.

The issue of women's sexuality and the law has been taken up by feminist theorists. First of all some states have prohibited or criminalised certain kinds of sexuality, for example, lesbianism and homosexuality. In such cases this has a role in the defining of motherhood in the sense that there are policies of withholding aid, for example from families which do not consist of husband, wife and children. Such groups are not regarded as 'families' by the law. Also involved are definitions of who is considered an 'acceptable mother', and thus discrimination against lesbian motherhood.

So the state is in fact saying something about sexuality through the processes of law. Generally speaking something has been said in different ways about state policies and sexual identity. (14) All these state policies on sexuality bear in different ways on the problem of my thesis; although the debates refer to other societies, they raise certain questions connected with Cypriot women.

Family law has always been politically relevant to the important problems of life under capitalism. Its relevance lies in the fact that on ever more frequent occasions in courts and in the offices of lawyers advising on the use of legal regulations, decisions are made on the organisation of sexual relationships and the ownership of property, and in these the legal system operates to produce a particular ideological view of social relationships and social obligations, thus redefining many problems in terms of the 'family unit'. Not only lawyers, but many members of society will inevitably perceive relationships and obligations in terms of the categories contained in the law, and will thus be pressured to conform to the ideals of family life on which the law is based. The lawyers are not working alone, but are the formal interpreters of these implicit beliefs.

The family has significance; it has been seen as a symbol of stability (Caldwell 1982; Rendel 1981), as a major means of social control (Leonard 1980), and as a basis for wage bargaining (Anthias; Beechey 1979). Further it has an economic role as a target for marketing, as a source of cheap female labour in the family household system (as McIntosh (1980) argues), and as the basis for the reproduction of future labour power.

How, then, do these theories relate to the women of Cyprus?

#### 10.4 Feminist research and Greek Cypriot women.

Western feminism, through its writings and other activities, has developed an almost universal awareness of the existence of injustices in the position of women. This I consider as the first step towards their elimination. The fact that the present research was conceived and carried out is in itself an indication that feminist research has created an awareness of women's issues amongst some Cypriot women. Since the rights of women are part of human rights in general, collective and concerted efforts by the international community are necessary for the elimination of discrimination wherever it may exist. Intense and continuous efforts are of course necessary for change to be effective and in order to achieve real equality. This study is an attempt to utilise some of the theories, methods and research techniques developed so far by feminist research, in order to make explicit the reality of the life of Greek Cypriot women in contemporary Cyprus. In 1979, when I started my fieldwork, this research was the first attempt to study in depth the contradictions and frustrations faced by women from a small Third World country continuously living in a conflict situation, and to examine how their life experiences are a direct result of a strong patriarchal



ideology developed and sustained by particular historical, social and political events.

Just as theories on Nationalism, the State and the Church were developed in the West and therefore reflect the experience of Western countries, so feminist theory has developed in specific social and political contexts (those of the West, or the English speaking world, and of Western European countries), and bears more relevance to the experience of women from the countries in which it was developed than to Third World Mediterranean societies, one of which is Cyprus. The specificity of the Cypriot experience vis-a-vis the International Women's Movement will be discussed later on. Here I will refer to the value of theoretical discussions for the general issues relating to gender and sex, the social and biological meanings of sexual and gender differences, and how these affect women's social identities.

Patriarchy as a basic term in the discussion of women, sexuality and inequality is explained in terms of the universal experiences of women in developed, developing and under-developed countries. The practice of defining women as objects through sexuality is an almost universal phenomenon.

In examining the issue of women and religion, which is

of particular importance in the Cypriot social formation, I came across similar discussions in the West. These were written by women of the cultures studied, or by women from 'Western Backgrounds' who are in a position to see the secular consequences of religion as a moral code which affects women's self-perception.

Like Maxine Molyneux (1983) I would like to present this work in support of an argument for the universality (15) of the problems faced by women, in terms of the most basic issues of family life, marriage, and their attempts to participate in public life. But there are important differences, between third world countries and the west, particularly in terms of historical experiences, the power of religion, independence struggles and so on. These differences have to be taken into account when feminist research is undertaken in such historical and sociopolitical contexts like Cyprus. The task of the feminist researcher in such a situation is much more delicate and difficult.

I hope that this research can be used as an illustrative example of the benefits gained from the existence of an already developed and substantial body of literature on the subject of women's position; also that it points to the need of adapting research techniques and selecting theoretical issues of some relevance to the

people under study.

Case studies play the role of the explorer of an hypothesis or a theory; they explore ideas through empirical evidence, and further the process of research by initiating comparative studies. The case study of the position of women in contemporary Cyprus should add to the body of knowledge concerning Mediterranean women and should generate ideas for further research on 'women living in conflict situations'. It might also, I hope, give rise to comparative studies about the life experiences of other women of the Middle East and about women whose lives are marked by the presence and strong influence of a powerful church.

It is important that a range of comparative studies of the position of women informs both theory and empirical basis of Western Feminism and so reduce its ethnocentricity. Feminist research itself will gain a wider perspective of both the universality and the particularity of women's position and experience. In as much as there is transferability of feminist theory and strategies to a range of societies then women in these societies will come to see their common position. At present in Cyprus Greek and Turkish women see themselves only as members of two antagonistic ethnic groups.

#### 10.5 8 Concluding Remarks

This thesis outlined briefly the origins, development and contemporary pattern of resources for and regulation of those relations and forms that legitimately (that is, successfully claim legitimacy (see Corrigan 1981 and 1982), 'fix' social identities, in this case the identities of women. I tried to show how ideologies and institutions, rituals and rationalities mesh together as a complex that works to subordinate and discipline women; to confine them to their role, as much by making it seem natural, essential and universal as by the use of obvious identifiable force and coercion. I tried to outline the hegemonic institutions of patriarchy which work to secure the 'active' (17) consent of women to their own subordination. The resources for and regulation of those relations and forms which fix women's identities have been examined in a series of contexts. First, the spatial and temporal context - that is, contemporary Cyprus, more narrowly, Greek Cypriot women in contemporary Cyprus. An outline history of Cyprus and the two dominant regulating institutions of Church and State has been provided to set the problem in its context and to throw into relief the dominance of these institutions on Greek Cypriot women's lives. Secondly, using the general resources summarised above, I tried to show the contemporary forms of control entailed in the policies and practices of Church and State, both in relation to 'ordinary' Greek Cypriot

women, and also in terms of the problem established in Part I Chapter 1. This problem of the WMPns seems to have been caused by the 1974 war. Although such women, along with many others, suffered because of that war, the war alone is not a sufficient explanation of why these particular problems are held to be insoluble, or why their single status is considered to be the fault of these women. In many ways 'their' problems are normal. Part III of this study tried to show that 'normalisation' at work.

Two further themes of this thesis are worth emphasising here. First, as has already been stressed, there is a need to be specific about the forms and relations that operate (with remarkable success) to secure the subordination of women, if these are really to be understood as material 'facts of life', of Greek Cypriot women today. It is not possible to work directly from the general theories surveyed above - theories which deal with women in general in relation to the State, the Church or the Law - to specific histories, <sup>which</sup> provide starting points for investigation, but these are only made fully meaningful in terms of observation and evidence and located in specific historical contexts as that detailed in Part III.

Second, and it is a consequence of trying to move from general theory to specific explanation, the general argument about the relative insignificance or archaic

qualities of allegedly precapitalist forms is challenged by my own investigation and that of others (Galdwell, Henderson etc.). State power - often focussed upon schooling and education as key ideological relations - does not erase or displace other forms of hegemony, including those of the Church. Nor do modern, rational and secular forms and practices progressively replace myth, folklore, custom and tradition. In both areas there is a recontextualisation and carrying forward, even if they are now dominated or organised by modern forms of State, official politics and legal relations.

Such general theories often ignore the limited base from which they generalise. They typically ignore the specific conditions involved in historical facts (e.g., the late unification of Italy), and more extensively, the relationship between religion and nationalism in colonised countries, such as Ireland or India. Of course, nationalism may itself take on religious features, as the funeral of Nasser in Egypt demonstrated. Religion, as mentioned repeatedly in this thesis, is far from being a decaying 'feudal relic'. These 'general' theories may in fact be based upon a distinctive minority of cases, drawn from the English speaking world (England, North America and Australasia), although, as the example of Quebec shows, even here religion may be a crucial factor.

In Cyprus feminist research would encourage Greek and Turkish female groups to understand the commonality of their position under a severe form of patriarchy embedded in a politically unstable situation.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 10

1. See chapters 7 and 8 for empirical data on the common experiences of Greek Cypriot rural and urban women.
2. For more details about the UNFPA project in Cyprus see 'Discrimination & Segregation of women workers in Cyprus,' Nicosia 1982.
3. 'Moral regulation', has been discussed by Durkheim (1912) & Corrigan P. (1981) in Sociological Review. An extension of this concept of moral regulation is that of ideal representations. Durkheim sees collective representations as symbolically experiencing aspects of sociality. In the context of Cyprus and the position of Greek Cypriot women, the ideal representations project norms and forms that have implications for conduct and belief, despite knowing that real conditions are different ; women are asked to 'live up' to what the ideal representations suggest or encourage as 'proper', 'good', etc. On this issue see also L. Althusser 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (1971).
4. E.Croll 1979, Women and rural development, Geneve, I.L.O., and E.Croll 1981, The politics of marriage in contemporary China, Cambridge University Press.
5. See for example, Littlejohn, Smart, Wakeford, Yuval-Davis in Power and the State. Also Ardener S. 'The nature of women in society', in Defining Females, 1978, or Barker and Allen 1976: Sexual divisions and society. In 'the antisocial family', Barret & McIntosh discuss the issue of socialization, the educational system and the reproduction of women's oppression.
6. See Bernstein and Johnson 1982, in 'Third world lives and struggles'. Also, Caldwell 'Women, the State and Italy', a paper delivered at the Political studies Association Conference in 1982.
7. See Delphy & Leonard 1980, The family as an economic system, paper presented to the conference on the institutionalization of Sex Differences at Kent University. The same authors have discussed women's special class position as wives in their BSA Conference paper 1982: Marxism, the division of labour and the oppression of women.
8. Barret & McIntosh in Feminist Review Vol 1, 1979.
9. See Meg Henderson 1979:50, MA Dissertation, University of London, Institute of Education.
10. Caldwell L. discusses this issue in her: Changes in the legislation and the family ,PhD 1982.



11. See Hollway W. 1982, Gender and Identity, unpublished PhD of the University of London.

12. See Henderson (1979) and Hollway (1982), both mentioned above.

13. For an expansion of this see Allat P. (1979), Stereotypes: females and families in the law. Also, Allock P. Legal ideology, the family and the position of women, BSA conference (1979).

14. See especially Bland L. (1979), Definitions of female sexuality 1890-1920.

15. Maxine Molyneux (1983) discusses the universality of women's experience by presenting her case studies of third world women.

16. Corrigan & Sayer (1981) discuss this in Law State and Society.

17. See Hollway W. (1982), Gender and Identity, and Jones D, Gossip: Notes on women's oral culture, in Women's Studies International Quarterly, 1980 Vol.3 .

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## CHAPTER 11: A POSTSCRIPT

- 11.1 Significant political events since 1980.
- 11.2 Changes in the political or social life of the Greek world.
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## CHAPTER 11: A POSTSCRIPT

### (1) Significant political events since 1980.

The fieldwork and the systematic gathering of empirical data for this thesis stopped in 1980. Since then I have been analysing and writing up my findings while working as the Greek Co-ordinator of the EEC funded project of the Schools Council among Greek Cypriot families in Britain. I have kept in contact with some of my participants by correspondence or personal visits to Cyprus, as well as keeping in contact with the culture and Cypriot women through my full-time work inside the Cypriot community in London.

Through these contacts and by studying published materials, I have monitored internal and external political developments as well as changes (or the lack of them) in those areas of social life which directly affect women's lives.

The severe political problem posed by the occupation and the threat against the sovereignty of the state has, as we have seen in previous chapters, overshadowed any other issue, including the question



of women's rights. In fact, the International Women's Year was used in Cyprus to highlight the political problem, making the invasion and the immense pain of the Cypriot people in general known to all participants in the WOMEN WALK HOME events of 1975 and 1976. (1) Since then, with the political problem still unresolved, the press and the media in Cyprus have been continuously occupied with events surrounding the efforts to solve this problem. International bodies like the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Community have all been involved. (2)

These bodies have passed resolutions and issued reports on the demilitarization of Cyprus or demanded the withdrawal of the invading forces, but the situation is still the same up to the moment of writing.

Today there are four armies on this island of about 600,000 inhabitants:

1. The Greek Cypriot Army which has amalgamated with the Greek Army.

2. The Turkish Army amalgamated with the Turkish Cypriot Army.
3. The United Nation Forces.
4. The British Army in the British Sovereign bases.

The presence of these four armies and the continuous threat of turning the island into a battlefield again, does not allow for a meaningful discussion of women's rights. Furthermore, the Turkish Cypriots established their own "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus" in 1983.

(3) Since 1974 the Turkish Cypriot administrators have continuously stressed the permanence of the present situation, while the Greek Cypriots on the other hand stress its temporary nature. According to R. King and S. Landbury (1982) the symbols used by the two administrations (the naming of territory and settlements, buildings, monuments, slogans, new societies, colonization and settlement planning) all reflect with precision their two opposed policies of persuading their peoples of the permanence or impermanence of the situation created by the war.

In the north there has been some popular reaction both against the symbols and against the implantation of a

large but unknown number of Turkish mainlanders, although the political security of the Turkish Cypriot 'state' is appreciated. In the South the government's message of impermanence is matched by older refugees' near universal desire to return. (4)

Reality in contemporary Cyprus has been 'reconstructed' differently by the two groups as a result of the different aspirations of the two communities of the island.

In the South, where this research took place, the desire to return to their homes in the occupied north was mainly felt by the older generation, although it is continuously cultivated in schools for younger Greek Cypriots as well. Many associations, from the Refugee Association to newly established Societies and groups like the Socialist Women's Movement of EDEK, put the 'return of the refugees to their homes' on their list of priorities. The elections of May 1981 for the House of Representatives were of some significance. These elections were held under the new 'reinforced representational' electoral system, and they showed that Greek Cypriots voted mainly for those who favour a prompt solution of the problem. Both AKEL (the communist party) and DHSY (the

conservatives) polled more votes than expected. On February 13th, 1983, Presidential elections were held in Cyprus in which three candidates took part - Mr S. Kyprianou, supported by his own Democratic party (DHKO) and by the communist party (AKEL); Mr Glafcos Clerides, supported by his Democratic Rally (DHSY); and Dr Vassos Lyssarides, leader of the Socialist Party (EDEK). Mr S Kyprianou was re-elected with 56.4% of all votes cast while Mr Clerides and Dr Lyssarides received 34% and 9.5% respectively.

Efforts to recreate a united Cyprus are continuing in the South and the 'Do Not Forget' slogan is visible and heard at almost every meeting. In the refugee settlements, one of which I visited in February 1983, the structural elements of permanence were there - housing, community centres, shopping centres, permanent jobs, some of which involve heavy investment, and social welfare services. Nevertheless the hearts of the adult population are turned towards their homes in the North. The latest efforts towards realising this goal involved the meetings between the Greek Prime Minister and the Cypriot President on the 7th April 1983. These were followed by an appeal by the Cypriot Government to the U.N. at the end of April.

The following press release shows the Greek government as a strong supporter of the sovereignty of the island for the benefit of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

"The position of the Greek Government is that neither Greece nor Turkey have any right to interfere in the affairs of Cyprus, which is an independent state and a member of the U.N. Its policy is the withdrawal of all troops and, under the auspices of the United Nations, the working out of an internal constitution for Cyprus, so that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can live harmoniously and with equal rights throughout the island. (5)"

As far as the opinion or interest of the West on the continuing political uncertainty in Cyprus is concerned, it seems that the Cypriot problem is very little noticed or taken into account. Irony and criticism is reflected in an article in the Times (London, April 6th, 1983) by Robert Fisk who says in his opening paragraph:

There are times when the Greek Cypriots seem to live in a world of illusions. Fly into Larnaca on Cyprus Airways and you will find a map in the airline magazine which shows the historic sites of the island. Paphos is there, and Nicosia and so too is Famagusta and Kyrenia or Bellapais or Salamis or anywhere else in the Turkish-held area north of the Attila line. (6)

As far as the issue of Missing Persons is concerned, there is a total lack of progress. On January 27th

1983, nine years after the Missing Persons went 'missing' as a result of the Turkish invasion, Mr Pérez de Cuellar, the U.N. Secretary-General states:

It is a cause of profound concern to me that the committee on Missing Persons has been unable thus far to overcome the procedural difficulties which have prevented it from embarking on its assigned mission. I consider that it is not inherently impossible to dispose of this problem in an understanding and compassionate way. (7)

The U.N. through the General Assembly on 17th December 1982, adopted resolution 37/181 which has been transmitted to the Chairman of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance for his attention.

Diplomatic exchanges have followed the above mentioned patterns for nine years now. Meanwhile the wives of Missing Persons interviewed and participating in this research have gone through all the stages of despair, hope, depression, and all kinds of financial, psychological, social and physical problems. Some of them have now re-married (8) others have accepted their 'bad luck' and have submitted to the demands of both their own and their husband's families and have withdrawn from society and given themselves up wholly to the upbringing of their children.

The WMPn 17, a 35 year old woman in 1979, now 39 and bearing the obvious physical signs of four more, agonizing years said in February 1983:

I have accepted that he will not come back. My children are both in the Gymnasium now. My whole life is devoted to them. I know very well that my inlaws will not accept any other kind of life for me. When they talk about other wives of Missing Persons they may accept second marriages, and find some words of sympathy to say but I know that when it comes to me they would be furious if I were to think of re-marrying. (9)

On the 8th March 1983 - Women's Day in Cyprus - the wife of a Missing Person was taken over to Greece to speak at a Press Conference at the Cypriot Embassy in Athens. Foreign journalists were invited and according to the press (9.3.83) this woman went over the personal drama of 'losing' her husband and her 5 year old son. The Cypriot press announced her trip and in 'small print' gave the tragic facts of her life. Journalists from all over the world may have written sympathetic comments about her suffering, but her life is still, up to the moment of writing, a continuous drama of anxiety, hope and despair.

All the newspapers in Cyprus on the 8th March 1983 had special articles about the position of Cypriot women in general. Left, Right and Centre became feminists for just one day, the day men allocated as a day of

'lip service' to women. The writers of these articles were mainly amateur journalists; women who, according to the views of the political parties they were representing, gave a certain picture of the existing situation and put forward strong or weak proposals for change. A review of those articles would show the right wing 'Simerini' representing the conservatives, promising that, as a strong opposition, they would fight for (1) the protection of motherhood and (2) childcare. The women's section of this right wing party, and S.E.K. - the Branch of Working Women - are asking the government for (1) equal pay for equal work and (2) recognition of the international convention on motherhood.

2. Changes in political or social life in the Greek world

The assumed strong links in terms of ethnic identity - that is language, religion and the feeling of belonging to one nation - between Greek Cypriots and mainland Greeks have been tested during various historical events over the last 30 years. The 'Enosis' movement in Cyprus, the junta regime (1967--1974) and its presence on the island, and the



1974 coup d'etat (described in more detail in Chapter 2) have all strongly influenced the feeling of a great number of Greek Cypriot population towards not seeing Greece as the motherland and accepting its leading role in political, educational and social issues. During discussions that I had in April 1981, August 1981 and February 1983 with members of various political parties and small women's groups, I felt I could identify a diversity of opinions as to how close together the two countries i.e. Greece and Cyprus could come, and how changes - political and social - in one country might affect the other.

I would argue that the relationship between the Greek mainland and Cyprus is that between the centre and the periphery: events at the centre strongly affect whatever happens in the periphery, and bring the possibility of change there, but the reverse effect is much weaker. It is with these thoughts in mind that I am going to refer briefly to the latest political and social changes in Greece concentrating on what is now called 'A revolution at the heart of Greek society', the Family Law Reform.

On the 18th October 1981, the general elections in Greece resulted in the victory of the Socialist Party,

PASOK (10) led by A Papandreou. It is the first ever Socialist government, and the fact that it received 48% of the votes shows a shift in the attitude of Greek people away from Conservatism.

In terms of the main theme of this thesis, the Socialist government has granted Greek women equal status within the family for the first time. Although the Greek Constitution of June 1975 had already given sexual equality with Article 4 (2), which states quite clearly that 'Greek men and women have equal rights and obligations', this was not the practice in daily life. There were many aspects of Greek laws that were in complete contradiction with this constitutional provision. For example, Article 116 (1) provided that:

existing provisions contrary to Article 4 (2) shall remain in force pending their abolition by law not later than December 31, 1982.

Greek women have been experiencing continuous inequality in their day to day lives, and it took the special committees and parliamentarians seven years finally to pass the Family Law Reform at the end of January 1983, one month after the constitutional time limit. Space here does not permit the detailing of

all the aspects and provisions of the new laws but the most important are:

1. Abolition of the concept of paternal authority its replacement by joint decision making by husband and wife on all matters affecting the family. So the wife now had an equal say on how the children should be brought up, and where the matrimonial home should be.
2. Women are not obliged to take on their husbands' surnames after marriage. Instead, they are now required to use their own maiden names for all legal purposes and transactions.
3. The children of a marriage may be given the surname of either parent according to their joint decision, declaring it at the time of their marriage.
4. The institution of dowry is now formally abolished. As explained in Chapter 5, this was an old and honoured institution in both Greece and Cyprus. Parents were legally obliged to present their daughters with a dowry. A daughter could sue her parents for a dowry if they refused

to give her one. The property transferred from parents to children was not a present, it was a legal obligation. With the new legislation the parents are not now prohibited from giving gifts to their children, but they do not have to conform to any law simply because they have daughters. This deeply ingrained social custom will not disappear overnight simply because a law has been passed, but officially at least, daughters will no longer be the subject of commercial bargaining.

5. Divorce is now available by mutual consent or after 4 years separation. Under pressure from 10,000 separated but undivorced people who joined an "Association of the Unredeemed" and actively demonstrated for legal reform, the previous government, in 1979, passed a temporary six-month law permitting divorce for those who had been separated for an uninterrupted period of six years. The new divorce law recognises "the objective breakdown of the marriage" as the basic justification for divorce, with four years of separation constituting conclusive evidence that the marriage has broken down. Divorce on the basis of mutual consent is also permitted after the first year of marriage. (11)

6. A step towards male equality as well, recognising the husband's right to alimony after divorce if the wife is in a better financial position than the husband.
7. Housework and caring for the children during the marriage are now regarded as contributions to the prosperity of the family. Thus a housewife is regarded as having assisted in the increase of the family's wealth even if she did not have a job outside the home.
8. The age of majority is lowered to eighteen and the minimum age for marriage for women is raised from fourteen to eighteen, the same as that for men.
9. The recognition, for the first time, of civil marriage, a very important event in terms of family life, family law, the State and the Church in Greece.

One needs to return to and reiterate here the fact that these reforms have no significance yet for Greek Cypriot woman.

3. Changes in Cyprus with special reference to those that relate to women

(i) General change

Central to my research are issues of change or lack of change in ecclesiastical and civil legislation in Cyprus relating to women; changes resulting in better representation of women in the Government, and important changes in social policies or practice relating to women and work, education and family life.

Since 1977, following the sudden death of Makarios, the first President and Archbishop of Cyprus, the two posts of head of the Church and head of State have been held by two different people for the first time after 19 years of existence of this Republic. President Kyprianou is the leader of the State - re-elected in 1978 and 1983 for a 5 year term, while Archbishop Chrysostomos is the head of the Church, appointed for life. The New Charter of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, passed in November, revealed a small modification in the grounds for divorce. These are the only changes that affect the mass of the

Greek Cypriot population. Discussions in the press and the media about divorce were not followed up by any government initiative to challenge the power of the church in any way.

The government committee on the Women's Decade, as mentioned in Chapter 5, undertook research according to its brief and made proposals to the government on policy changes. The report, according to the government representative of the Ministry of Justice, (12) is confidential and is still at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security waiting to be followed up. A new National Committee for Women is now in the process of being formed as a follow up to the previous government one. The initiative has been taken by the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry will be the President of this National Committee. All non-governmental organisations have been notified through the newspapers, and applications from 32 associations and organisations have shown the immediate interest of these people in being represented on the committee. The Ministry of Justice has already laid down the criteria for the selection of representatives to the National Committee. When

interviewed in January 1983 the Ministry expected that a committee of 4 government members and 4 non-government members (13) would start working by the beginning of March. The drafts of its programme or work are already there, and the feeling that the Ministry wants to convey to Greek Cypriot women is that the time has come when the policies will be put into practice: 'Do not worry, we are working for you....'"

Obviously, the formal legal changes in Greece have been taken into account and are being considered seriously by the Cypriot Government. This assurance has been given verbally, and it has been stated that the cases of mixed marriages between Greek and Cypriot citizens will be studied in detail so that the mismatching of laws will be dealt with first.

Reaction to the Family Law Reform in Greece has been very positive on the part of the various small Greek Cypriot women's groups, who, through the newspapers and in formal gatherings of a political nature are now urging the Cypriot government to follow in the footsteps of Greece and confront the Church on the issues of divorce,



marriage and the dowry system. (14). Even immigrant Cypriot women, such as the group of Cypriot women in England, take positions and urge public discussions through the community papers. The abolition of the dowry system, an important factor for change in the position of women (15), is important as the first act following the reforms in Greece.

(3) (ii) Changes in the working life of Greek Cypriot women

As far as the position of Cypriot women in employment is concerned I rely heavily on the results of the latest research done by W. J. House on The Participation of the Female Labour Force. (16) Taking up the issues already discussed in Chapter 6, the relevant question to be answered here is: Has any significant change been achieved in this area of women's lives?

In 1980 a 'Multi-Round' Demographic Survey (17) was carried out under the UNFPA project 'Comprehensive Population Programme' for Cyprus. Data was collected on economic activity and the work pattern of married females were analysed by

W J House (Doc.14) in order to identify the determinants of participation by the female labour force. According to the report of the survey (Nic. 1983) the effect of the following influences on the women's 'probability' chances in the labour market were to be measured.

- (1) Age and marital status.
- (2) Educational level, as a proxy for the opportunity wage of the women in the labour market.
- (3) Pregnancy status, and number and ages of children, which reflect the constraints on labour force participation.
- (4) The presence of an inactive adult female in the household - a potential child-care substitute.
- (5) Age at marriage, which indicates the probability of pre-marriage work.
- (6) Place of residence, and type of household (nuclear or extended).

- (7) Husband's education and work status, as proxies for the woman's perceived need for income.
- (8) The proportion of married women in the locality who are in the labour force, and their employment structure, as proxies for social activities concerning married women's employment.

The major conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of all the data collected in the above mentioned survey was that participation in the labour force was in conflict with child-rearing. Since this finding was of importance to the government which aims to raise female participation in the labour force as well as fertility, the expected step was to offer protection to the working mother and to provide satisfactory childcare facilities. From this follows the question when is the Cypriot government going to ratify the ILO Convention No. 13 (protection of motherhood)? The prevailing situation in Cyprus as compared to the requirements of the Convention show that Cyprus lags behind other countries in many aspects. (18)

In terms of private and state provision for all children of pre-school age only 19% used some sort of childcare institution in 1981. (19) These reports have also pointed out that although the Cypriot government ratified ILO Convention No. 111 in 1968 and made thus a commitment to promote equal treatment for women in the labour market, no actual measures have been taken to promote this principle. It is interesting to note here that Convention 100 which concerns Equal Pay for work of Equal Value has not yet been ratified by Cyprus, since it creates an obligation to promote the principle of equal pay. Although the British Equal Opportunities Legislation (20) has been studied very carefully by interested parties in Cyprus no step forward has yet been taken.

#### 11.4 In her own words:

This thesis was an attempt to understand the position of contemporary Greek Cypriot women. Although the fieldwork was completed in 1980, five years later, in 1985 on the eve of submitting this thesis, and although many conferences and debates about women's

rights have taken place in Cyprus, international agreements have been ratified and a national committee with representatives from governmental organisations had been formed, Greek Cypriot women experienced very little change. As one of my participants who kept in touch with me by correspondence wrote on January the 13th 1985:

I was hoping to be able by now, 5 years since we talked about these things (referring to the long interview we had during my fieldwork), to discuss openly, to put my views about women's rights forward and find some support at least from young women. Still most of my colleagues at the office laugh at me and call me a 'feminist' with a voice full of irony. One of them came to the office yesterday morning with a great announcement: my friends, this time it must be a boy!! ("It", was the foetus in his wife's womb and surely it was going to be a boy). He was telling us in a proud voice that his wife had pains in the back and she was suffering much more in this second pregnancy than when she gave birth to their first child, the girl ... this is Cyprus!! This is the real Cypriot attitude to the two sexes. Stay where you are now (meaning in the U.K.) if you want to be yourself, to be proud of being a woman and to develop your interests ... (U.2, 37 years old now, is the mother of two children, 11 and 9 years old, a senior civil servant herself and married to a highly educated, highly paid administrator of the Judiciary.)

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 11: POSTSCRIPT

1. The events known as WOMEN WALK HOME, took place in the south part of the GREEN LINE which separates the Greek from the Turkish sector of the island. Greek Cypriot women, especially the refugees, hoped that their efforts to bring together women from all over the world would have an effect on Turkish Cypriot women and politicians from both sides, so that their homes in the north could be theirs once again. The demonstrations and the conference (December 1975) raised hope which was then followed by disappointment as a result of the standstill in the political front.
2. The 1974 invasion has been presented as an act of aggression by one sovereign country against another to International bodies such as the UN, Council of Europe, EEC and NATO. These presentations have helped in maintaining worldwide interest in the Cypriot problem. Resolutions passed during the various sessions were not implemented, however, which was a further factor causing distress to the Greek Cypriot population.
3. On 15.11.1983 there was a unilateral Turkish declaration of Independence proclaiming the "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus".
4. S.Ladbury and R.King (1982), using examples of visual images (road signs, statues in honour of heroes, etc.) tried to explain how the Greek and Turkish Cypriot political representatives present different realities to their people. (See references to this chapter for more details about their paper). See also the book THE REFUGEES OF CYPRUS, for detailed references to refugees' feelings and reactions to their situation soon after the war.
5. As soon as the socialist government of PASOK came to power in Greece a press release made known its views on the CYPRUS QUESTION in 1982. Papandreou, the Prime Minister, presented Greece as a strong supporter of right of Cyprus' to make decisions independently of Greece and Turkey on the most important issue affecting the life of Cypriot people.
6. The London Times of April 6th 1983 published an article by Robert Fisk (which was pointed out to me by one of my participants who at the time was on a short visit to London), who tactlessly presents the Greek Cypriots as living an illusion; they still have the occupied areas on their maps, he says; and my participant commented: but they were ours and we will always want them back.

7. The successive initiatives by the UN Secretary on the issue of MPns have not yet born any fruit. That leaves my participants of Sample A still in the limbo situation they were in in 1980.

8. Four of my participants of sample A who remarried wrote to me just before their engagement to express their firm decision to go ahead and get a divorce from the Church; all these letters contained elements of guilt feelings alongside anger and desperation about the deadlock concerning their missing husbands. Like other researchers (e.g. Oakley 1979) I have experienced the closeness that in depth research among women can bring so that years after the fieldwork I continued to receive letters from some of my pariticipants with a lot of details about their lives.

9. WMPn 17 considered it an insult if I happened to be in Cyprus and did not make the time to visit her. Her loneliness was unbearable and her decision to stay like that for the children's sake was hard but the only acceptable route for her to take.

10. See 'PASOK & EXOUSIA':PASOK AND POWER, Paratiritis publicatons Athens, 1980, which discusses the principles and practices of this party which, at the time of submission of this thesis, is the governing party in Greece.

11. See M.Skapinter in the ATHENIAN 1983.

12. The Cypriot Ministry of Justice finally published the report of the committee on Cypriot Women in 1983 but it was not made available to the public, nor even to researchers who had a special interest in its contents; it has therefore been impossible for me to comment on it, although I believe it to be relevant to this thesis.

13. Discussions about the formation of a National Commitee went on for some time; negotiations about the membership took months and the commitee finally started its sessions in 1984. Nothing has been publicly disclosed concerning the agenda of work or decisions taken.

14. The effects of the Family Law Reform in Greece were the subject of debate at various levels in Cyprus but have not yet resulted in the formation of a working party of lawyers and social scientists willing to sit down and seriously address the issue of Civil marriage and Church involvement in family law in Cyprus.

15. I consider the dowry system, whether in its formal contractual form or in its informal but ideologically powerful traditional presence, an important institution

affecting women's identity. Legal reforms in Greece have attacked this obsolete institution and hopefully are creating the right atmosphere for change.

16. W.J.House and his team at the Planning Bureau in Nicosia have illustrated the discrimination in the area of women and work with a full scale research survey. Statistics from this collective ILO programme have actually confirmed what my participants have told me about their own experiences.

17. The UNFPA project contains comparative studies on population trends in various developing countries. The contribution on Cyprus is extremely revealing of the disadvantage in which women in employment find themselves.

18. The protection of motherhood has been one of the prime considerations in most countries, especially those that campaign against low birth rates. If motherhood is to be encouraged then it should be protected by the welfare state; such logical thinking has not yet entered the minds of decision makers of the Republic of Cyprus. Mothers in paid employment are punished for having children, for offering the state new citizens, soldiers for war and peace; besides losing their pay and/or position if they decide to stay on nursing the new citizen for more than the short period of 8 weeks before and after birth, they have to struggle for childcare facilities which are very scarce. See also Stylianou O. 1983:187 for more details on this matter.

19. The childcaring institutions should expand both in numbers and in terms of the facilities they offer working mothers; the provision, as O. Stylianou 1983:189 shows, is still minimal.

20. The British Equal Opportunities legislation is highly regarded in Mediterranean countries, Cyprus included, and could be followed as a guideline for changes in the Cypriot situation. There are of course the critics of the British system who claim that it is hardly in the vanguard since it is well behind some EEC countries.



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APPENDICES FOR CHAPTER 1

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LEGAL ISSUES























APPENDICES FOR CHAPTER 4

DOWRY CONTRACTS

Twenty four handwritten dowry contracts have been kept by the village priest, and with a written permission by the district bishop I reproduced (photocopied and translated into English) some of them for the benefit of the reader who wants to get some idea of the importance of the legal form of such 'religious' documents.

The first contract presented here is dated 16.7. 1930 and in two pages says the following:

The undersigned H.... I....., father of K.... I..... who is engaged to N....L... from ....with this I declare that I give as a dowry to the above mentioned K and N the following pieces of land:

1. At the site called Lazaros I give her a field with olive trees; boundaries: govermental land on one side and E.E. with A.M. on the others.

2. At the site called Koplatanios I give her an orchard with all its trees; boundaries: K.H. and O.H on one side and paths on the others.

3. At the site called Kastania a vineyard, boundaries govermental land all over.

4. At the site called Xero a vineyard; boundaries a precipice, I. A, A.S and govermental land.

5. In the village a house with its yard and an extra piece of land; boundaries; a road, the house of G..K.. (heirs: J...T... and A... C... and E... K..) The above mentioned house is given to her on the condition that the father of the bridegroom K..L.., is obliged to build in that piece of land 2 rooms for me and my wife to live there untill we die and after our death this will belong to my daughter and son in law. If his father refuses to build the above mentioned two rooms dwelling he is obliged to pay the couple the amount of £100.

All the above mentioned property is offered and granted as a dowry with the agreement of myself, my wife I.. H... and all the members of my family, to my daughter and son in law. In the case of any intrusion in one or the other of these properties by any member of my family I am obliged to compensate to them the worth of that property at the price suggested by the village committee.

At .....(name of village)

on the 16.7.1930

The parents: of the bride:1.....

2.....

of the groom:1.....

2.....

(All signatures on special stamps)

Witnesses: 1.....

2.....

The future bridegroom.....

The future bride.....

The priest:I certify the above..... 16.7.1930

#### DOWRY CONTRACT 9

Today on the 10th of March 1940 an engagement is taking place between the household of P....G....from V.... who has a daughter named Chr and the household of T... C.... from A..... who has a son called St.....

#### Conditions:

a) The undersigned P...G.... father of the girl Chr.. and her mother Th...P.... give to our son in law ST. ..T... the following with our own good will.

1. One vineyard at the site pervolia with boundaries to Ch and M, Cr I., the road, X.. P.. with all trees which are already in it.

2. One vineyard and one orchard, at the site alonia of 2 donums with boundaries to A.. M.. a small road, and heirs of S... M.... on the third and fourth side.

3. One piece of land near the village, of 1/4th of a donum bordering on two sides in a field belonging to the heirs of F...T... and a road on the other, with almond trees already growing in it.

4. Two orchards near the village each one 1/2 a donum bordering: a stream, P.... G.... another small stream, A... A... and A...S.... with one walnut tree that is already in it.

5. Half of the olive trees from the side Lazaros

6. A house consisting of one room and a small yard in the village bordering a road, G... M...., P....G.... and another road.

7. A building plot in the village, about 200 square feet bordering P...G..., Geor...M..., C...M... and a road.

b) The undersigned T... Ch... father of St..., and Eu... T.... his mother, give to our son:

1. the one fourth of our property that belongs to both of us.

c) Special agreements

1. The parents of the bride are obliged to give their

daughter the usual trousseau consisting of clothing and kitchen utensils.

2. The marriage will take place in 4 years from today as agreed.

3. In case it becomes necessary for the wedding to be hastened owing to lack of self control on the part of the groom, then the ceremony will take place without the parents of the bride Ch... be obliged to prepare the agreed trousseau and dowry completely but only as far as their financial condition allows it.

The undersigned future newly weds St.. and Chr.. agree completely with the above mentioned agreements as arrived at by their parents and so they sign this present document.

At..... on the 10th March 1940.

The witnesses

K.... E....

A.... K....

The contracting parties

1.Father of the bride

2.Mother of the bride

3.Father of the groom

4.Mother of the bride

6.The Groom

8The Bride

I certify the above.....(the Priest)



DOWRY CONTRACTS USED TO BE HANDWRITTEN UP TO THE EARLY 1950S WHEN THE CHURCH INTRODUCED A TYPED DOCUMENT WHICH HAD TO BE FILLED IN BY THE PRIEST. Here is one of the blank versions of the document:

1. The undersigned..... from ..... and .....  
..... from ..... in order to give out  
(extradite) for marriage with God's will/ help our  
daughter (sister, niece )..... , with Mr.....  
from..... we promise to give her besides everything  
whivh is already on her name, as a dowry the  
following:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

....

.....

...

2. Mr..... from..... and Mrs ..... from...  
..... we agree to engage our son (brother, nephew).....  
from..... and to marry him with ... from... and we  
promise to give him besides everything which is in his  
name already as a dowry, namely:

3. The marriage ceremony will take place by the.... at

the latest.

4. This contract will be kept by the priest who performed the engagement ceremony of the above mentioned, and a copy of it is given to the fiance. At.....on the..... 19..

Witnesses	The contracting parties
	parents a.....
1.	b.....
	parents a..... signa-
2.	b..... tures
	Future groom.....
	Future bride.....

I confirm the above:priest contacting the ceremony.....

DOWRY CONTRACT SIGNED ON THE 11.11.195.

\*IN THIS CASE THE BRIDE WAS OF SOME AGE AND THE GROOM WAS A WIDOWER. THE BRIDE WAS ORPHANED FROM A FATHER SO HER BROTHERS AND COHEIRS MARRIED HER OFF AND SIGNED THE DOCUMENT ASHER PROTECTORS.

A) The undersigned Brothers and co-heirs from V.....  
A.....and K.....A.....and A..... A....from V.....  
in order to (give) extradite for marriage, with God's  
help our....., with Mr. I..... from .....  
we promise to give her, besides everything that is

already in her name, as dowry, the following:

1. One house in the village consisting of two rooms, one upstairs room and a stable within it and a yard.
2. One building site for building a house and half a donum near the house.
3. Half of the orchard at the site called 'Rmanou tou Gerou' with water in it.
4. The whole of the orchard at the site called Mersinouthkia with the trees.
5. The vineyard at the site called Platanos and half of the vineyard at Athasia.
6. Half of the land by the boundaries of K....

B) I C.....E.....from I..... agree to get engaged and marry O.....A..... from ..... and I agree to the above mentioned contract as well as to the condition that the marriage must take place in A..... where we will live permanently. I am the father of three children who will live with us.

C) The marriage ceremony will take place after three months the latest.

D) This contract will be kept by the priest who

performed the engagement ceremony and a copy of it is  
given to the fiance. At .....

On the 11.11.1957 (no witnesses)

I confirm the above (the priest).....

Signatures of brothers.....

.....

QUOTATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN CYPRUS DURING  
MY FIELDWORK 1979-1980

1. Dowry problems and early pregnancy

"On the day of the engagement my fiance and his father insisted on putting down in the dowry contract in every detail all the pieces of movable and immovable property that my parents intended to give me. So my parents agreed to everything that he asked because it has already been known that the engagement was taking place on that day, the cooking and the preparations have been finished, most of the guests have arrived. They couldn't bear the shame of a quarrel. So they named everything they already had and some more linen and movable property they would try to buy for me. They didn't intend to buy me a sewing machine because they couldn't afford that as well. Three other sisters younger than me needed to be dowered. My fiance was very demanding and he used to shout and do whatever he wanted... I got pregnant without even realising it. At that time I wanted to commit suicide. Pressure has been put on my parents not only to prepare my dowry quickly and have the marriage before the baby was due but also to buy me a sewing machine, so that I could work at home and earn some money myself. He blackmailed my parents that he was going to leave me. I couldn't have an abortion and the day before the wedding he disappeared..

.. My brother borrowed some money and gave it to him to make him come back..." (R2)

2. Marital problems arising from dowry issues

"He

(the future fiance) asked for a house during the 'proxenia' (marriage negotiations) and my father agreed. On the day of the engagement, as my father said to me later, his father asked if I could have my parents' house, a big one in the central position of the village with a very big yard and a building site next to it instead of the other one my parents had built for me near the church. It was written down that my parents will give us their own house and that my future husband would give my father a piece of land at the edge of the village to build the new parental home. The agreement was signed, the marriage took place on time in 1968 and I had three children the one after the other. My mother and younger sisters helped me so much with my children in housework and working unpaid in my husband's fields whenever I or the kids were ill and I couldn't do the job he expected me to. Four years after the marriage he suddenly changed his mind and thought that he was deceived. The building site he gave my father was of value now that the village expanded and land prices went up. "You deceived me", he accused my father. "If you don't give me £500 in cash or my land back I will never allow you to enter my house or my wife and children to come to you"...The conflict has lasted for 5 years now. Nobody from my family dare come and visit me. Festivals, christenings, other family gatherings went by and I

couldn't see my family. In the end my poor father went as a worker to Saudi Arabia and sent back £500 to my husband...and everything was forgotten" (R70)

3. Family, Honour, Dowry and Education

"Before finishing the Gymnasium, my uncles from abroad, who used to come from London every summer holiday and stay with us offered to take me with them to study there. I was a good student since I was six. But my mother was very much against that. She was afraid I might lose my honour. She persuaded my father that although she loved her brothers she couldn't trust them to look after me as she did, for 'eighteen years always having me in the sight of her eye.' She couldn't trust her sisters in law and she insisted on me following a teacher's course in the town where my father could take me in his own car to and from the college. My parents knew everything that I was doing; my movements were controlled as if they had no trust in me. And when I got the teacher's certificate they decided: 'That's enough for her! She doesn't need more than that. She will soon get married and have a family. She has her own salary now. We have done everything we could for her'." (R 3)

4. Parents' property portioned after each child's marriage

"When I was single and was living with my parents I suffered very much. My elder sisters, 4 of them,

married off one by one and each one got their dowry with them an amount of land and their house. My father's property was getting smaller and smaller. Each piece of land given to the son in law made a difference to his income since he relied on farming. My parents became very poor and by the age of 13 sent me out to work as a maid in the town. The work at the doctor's house was very hard. And I longed for my friends and the family in the village. Communications were very difficult then. Then I worked at the factory and saved all my money for the dowry. By the time I got engaged my parents were very old and could not help me with my house so I put all the money I saved and then borrowed a lot to finish it." (R 17 ).



## APPENDICES FOR CHAPTER 5

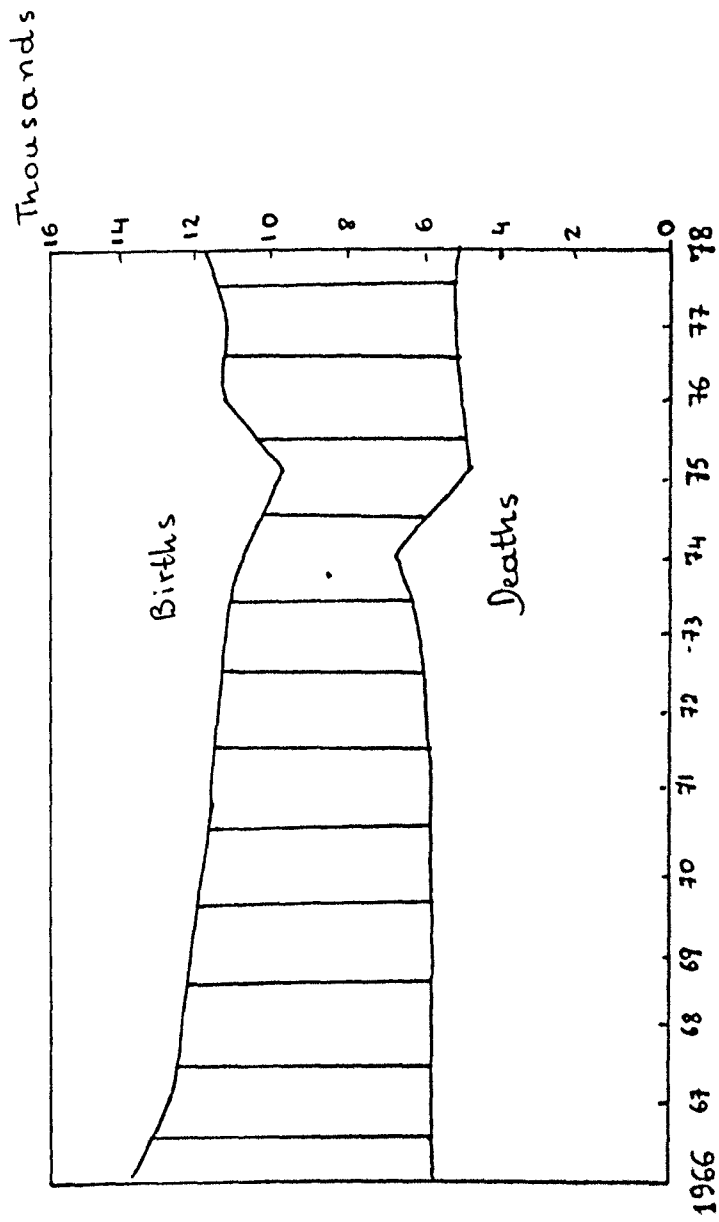
### A. MORE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA GATHERED FROM GOVERNMENTAL PUBLICATIONS:

- i) Population changes between 1966-1978
- ii) Net migration, 1966-1978
- iii) Population by age and sex as at 1960 and 1978 censuses
- iv) Number of towns and villages by size
- v) Estimated mid year de jure population by marital status
- vi) Population by marital status sex and age group.
- vii) Total marriages by type and order of marriage
- viii) Mean age at marriage and marriage rate

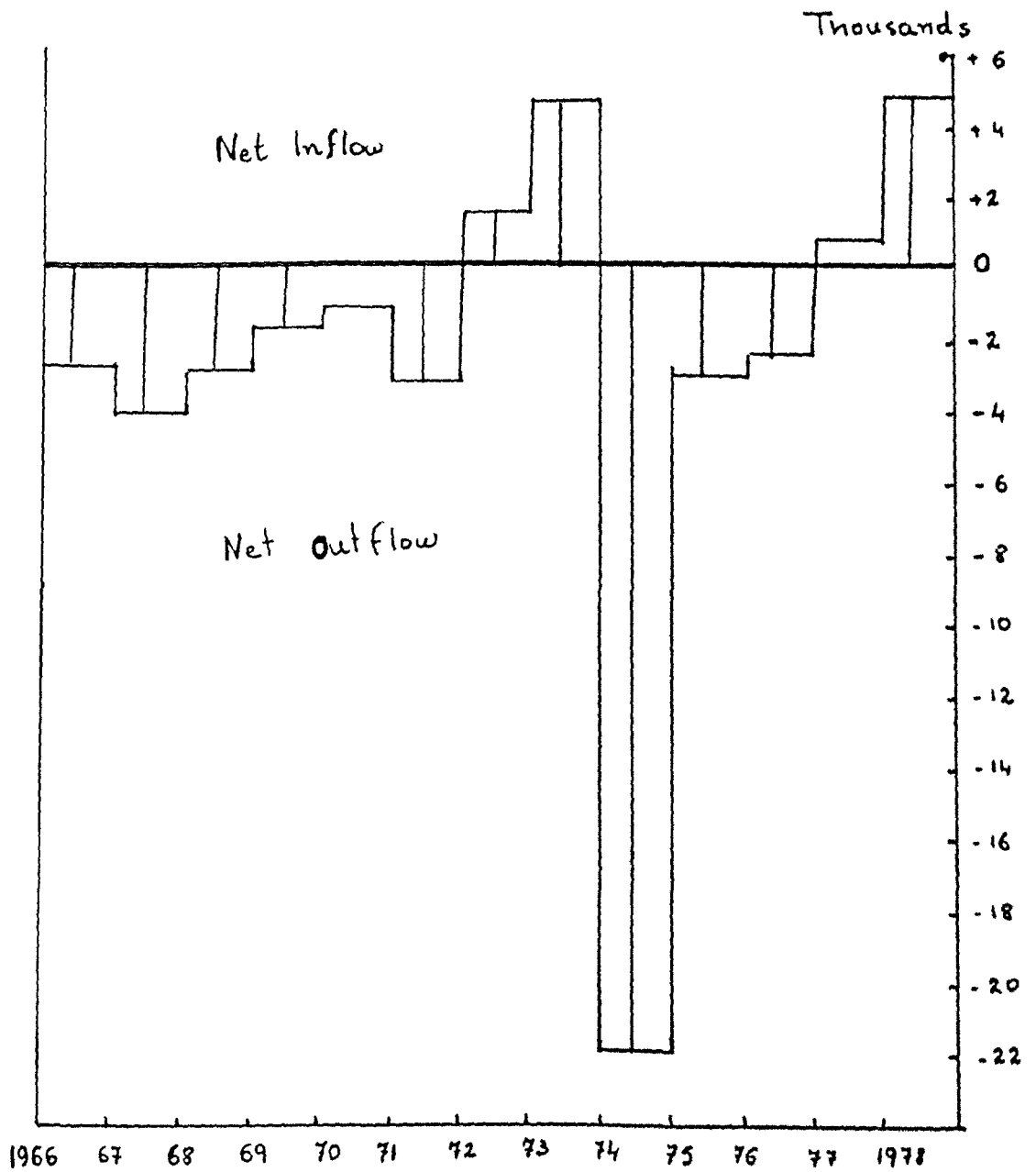
### B. MORE DATA ON EDUCATION

### C. ABBREVIATIONS

POPULATION CHANGES  
1966 - 1978



# NET MIGRATION 1966 - 1978









POPULATION BY MARITAL STATUS, SEX AND AGE GROUP AS AT CENSUS

1976

AGE GROUP															Marital Status and Sex
All ages	Under 15	Total over 15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70 and over	
612,851	155,815	457,036	55,918	59,208	52,655	40,052	37,465	32,228	29,389	28,688	23,662	25,819	21,806	40,146	Grand Total
306,144	80,064	226,080	33,597	30,942	26,652	20,170	18,570	15,737	14,064	14,099	11,525	12,201	10,132	18,391	Males: Total
153,842	80,064	73,778	33,435	25,688	9,377	2,013	697	406	341	313	253	318	326	611	Never Married
144,431	-	144,431	135	5,200	17,143	18,004	17,695	15,121	13,496	13,438	10,840	11,185	8,880	13,293	Married
3,298	-	6,298	1	5	18	21	30	61	89	169	291	539	300	4,274	Widowed
943	-	943	1	22	71	83	86	79	71	106	83	107	90	144	Divorced/ Separated
630	-	630	24	27	43	49	62	70	67	73	58	52	36	69	Not stated
306,707	75,751	230,956	32,321	28,266	26,003	19,882	18,895	16,491	15,325	14,589	12,137	13,618	11,574	21,755	Females: Total
138,655	75,751	62,904	30,828	16,935	6,344	2,220	1,455	964	747	701	555	632	617	906	Never married
141,054	-	141,054	1,469	11,175	19,288	17,189	16,726	14,635	13,369	12,258	9,661	9,883	7,267	8,134	Married
23,637	-	23,637	-	49	139	177	336	532	833	1,253	1,597	2,795	3,542	12,384	Widowed
2,860	-	2,860	8	83	205	266	323	320	333	339	267	265	207	244	Divorced/ Separated
501	-	501	16	24	27	30	55	40	43	38	57	43	41	87	Not stated

-TOTAL MARRIAGES BY TYPE AND ORDER OF MARRIAGE

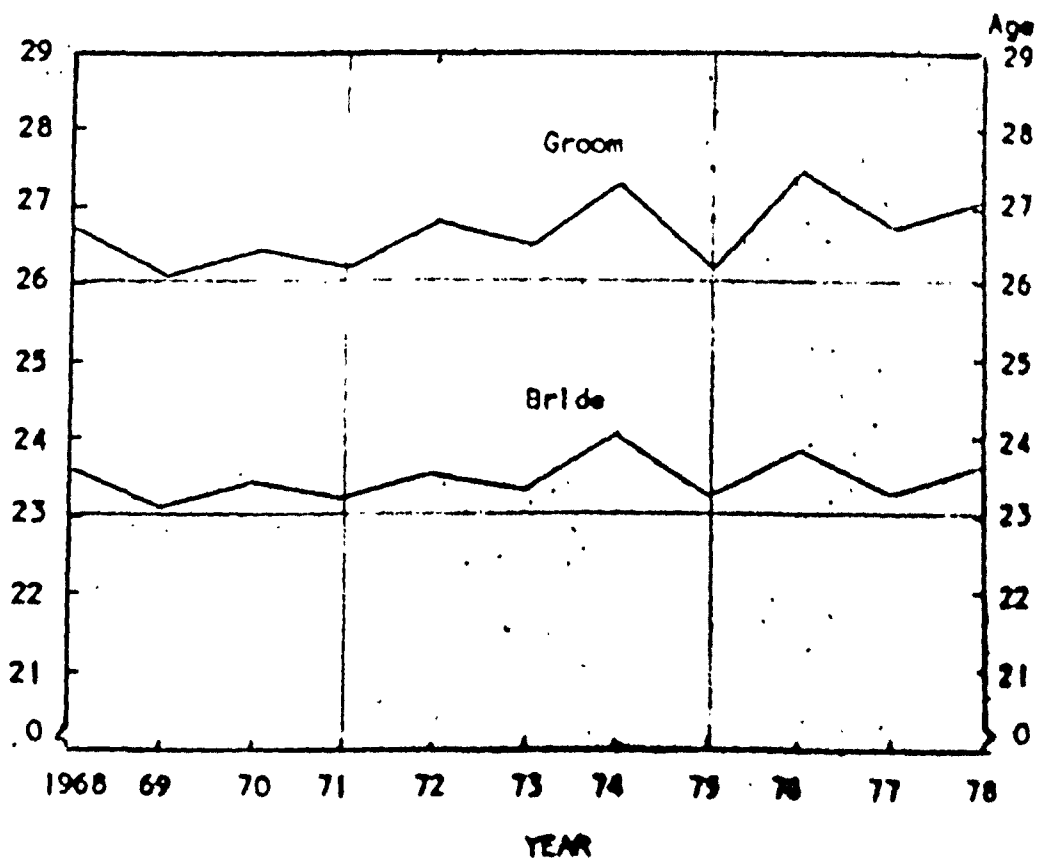
1977 - 1978

1977			1978			GROOM
BRIDE			BRIDE			
Total	First	2nd+3rd	Total	First	2nd+3rd	
Absolute numbers						
<u>5,008</u>	<u>4,852</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>4,974</u>	<u>4,806</u>	<u>168</u>	<u>TOTAL MARRIAGES</u>
4,721	4,638	83	4,638	4,549	89	Ecclesiastical
287	214	73	336	257	79	Civil
<u>4,695</u>	<u>4,630</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>4,652</u>	<u>4,573</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>1st MARRIAGE</u>
4,487	4,454	33	4,407	4,366	41	Ecclesiastical
208	176	32	245	207	38	Civil
<u>313</u>	<u>222</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>322</u>	<u>233</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>2nd+3rd MARRIAGE</u>
234	184	50	231	183	48	Ecclesiastical
79	38	41	91	50	41	Civil
% Percentages						
<u>100.0</u>	<u>96.9</u>	<u>3.1</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>96.6</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>TOTAL MARRIAGES</u>
100.0	98.2	1.8	100.0	98.1	1.9	Ecclesiastical
100.0	74.5	25.5	100.0	76.5	23.5	Civil
<u>93.8</u>	<u>92.5</u>	<u>1.3</u>	<u>93.5</u>	<u>91.9</u>	<u>1.6</u>	<u>1st MARRIAGE</u>
95.0	94.3	0.7	95.0	94.1	0.9	Ecclesiastical
72.5	61.3	11.2	72.9	61.6	11.3	Civil
<u>6.2</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>6.5</u>	<u>4.7</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>2nd+3rd MARRIAGE</u>
5.0	3.9	1.1	5.0	4.0	1.0	Ecclesiastical
27.5	13.2	14.3	27.1	14.9	12.2	Civil



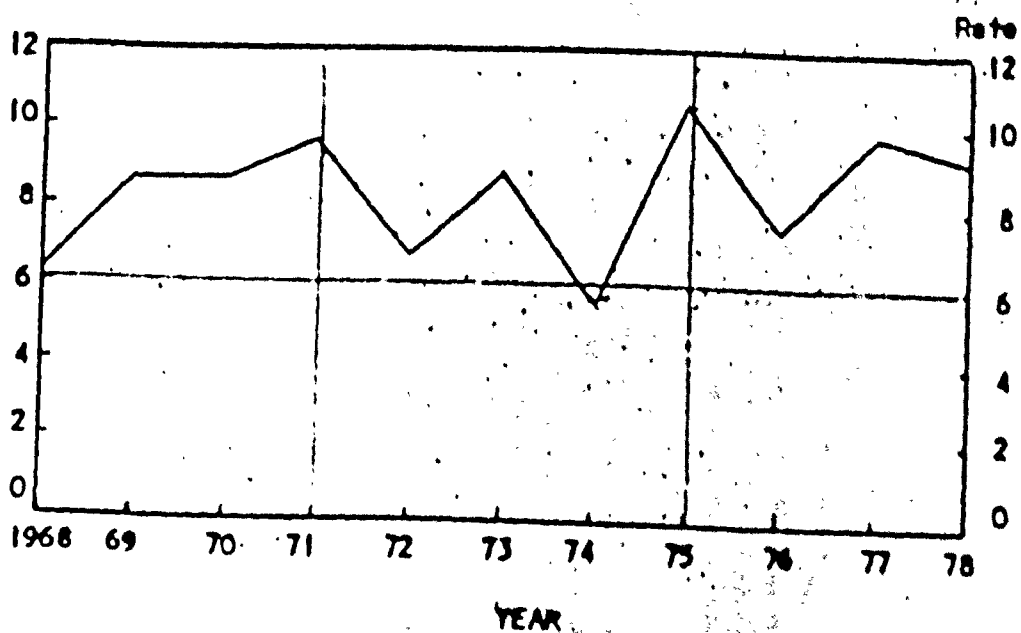
DIAGRAM

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE  
1968-1978



DIAGRAM

MARRIAGE RATE  
1968-1978



(B) MORE DATA ON EDUCATION IN CYPRUS:

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN AND EDUCATION.

Table 2 , Percentage of girls enrolled in primary education.

Year	% of Girls	% of Boys
1950-51	46	54
1965-66	48.7	51.3
1975-76	48.4	51.6
	49	51

Source: Statistics in Education 1980.

2. Private Primary Education.

This exists side by side with state education but on a very small scale. It includes provision for various ethnic groups. The following table provides a breakdown of the relatively small number of pupils involved.

Table 3 Pupils in private primary education in 1980 by ethnic group, nationality and sex.

	Boys	Girls	Boys and Girls
Cypriot: Total	287	346	633
i) Greek	277	339	616
ii) Armenian	7	6	13
iii) Turkish	3	1	4
British	142	147	289
American	8	12	20
Other	131	87	218
Total	568	592	1,160

Source: Statistics in Education 1980:42

3. Secondary Education.

Secondary education is available in both public and private schools and so far it is not compulsory. The following table provides a breakdown for the last two decades.

1. Pre-primary Education: Nursery and Playgroups.

Until very recently this level was mainly in the hands of the private sector, a factor with obvious disadvantages for mothers and children of working class families mainly because of financial reasons. After the war, particularly as a result of the pressure of the refugee population, the Ministry of Education set up 22 public pre-primary schools with 60 classes. In 1979-80, 69 further public nurseries were established with the intention of adding 60 more in 1980-81 and of providing for all 4-5 1/4 year olds by 1981-82. No sexual discrimination has been allowed as far as the Ministry is concerned in terms of enrolment, and this has been carried out in practice.

2. Public primary Education.

Primary education has been free since Independence and compulsory since 1962. Much more than secondary education it has been modelled on the British system, using a modern curriculum, teaching methods and materials. The entry age in 1980 was 5 1/4 and the leaving age was when the pupil had completed the prescribed six-year course or had reached the age of 13, whichever came first. In 1979-80 out of a total primary school population of 49,296, 25,296 were urban-based and 23,990 rural-based. (Again this shows the dramatic effect of the 1974 war, which the average school ratio was 3:2, rural:urban). Considering sex differentiation the figures in 1979-80 were as follows:

Table 1.

	boys	girls
Total	25,160	24,126
Urban	12,934	12,362
Rural	12,226	11,764

Source: Statistics in Education 1980.

As far as the relative enrolment of girls and boys in primary education is concerned the following table, going back to the precompulsory period, shows that since the 1950s attendance levels have been effectively balanced.

Table 4. Percentage of primary school leavers by sex and type of education who follow various types of Secondary Education.

	1969-70			1979-80		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Enrolment in general secondary education	46.9	50.9	48.8	78.2	86.5	82.2
Enrolment in Technical Secondary Education	12.2	1.4	7.0	9.8	1.9	6.0
Enrolment in Private Secondary Education	20.1	22.4	21.2	5.9	6.0	5.9
Enrolment in 8 Form schools	3.4	2.8	3.4	-	-	-
TOTAL	82.6	77.5	80.1	93.9	94.4	94.8
DROPOUTS	17.4	22.5	19.9	6.1	5.6	5.9

Source: Statistics of Education 1980

Free education played a decisive role in the expansion of secondary schooling especially for girls as tabel 4. shows.

As table 5 shows the numbers of boys and girls were fairly even in general education in 1979-80 while in the more specialised sectors outside classical, commercial and L.E.M., breakdowns by sex shows girls in very small numbers, reflecting the set of ideas of Cypriot society, the traditional proclivity to prepare girls for certain kinds of jobs, and the way relation are in practice in spite of "equality of opportunity". For example, according to data gathered by the Department of Statistics and Research for 1977-78, out of a total number of 3,794 pupils in all classes in Technical schools only 259 were girls. The number of girls attending classes in commercial education has increased from 41.5% in 1972-73 to 44.2% in 1977-78 while for boys there has been a decrease from 30.6% to 20.3%.

The reason that girls make this choice is possibly that it offers them the chance of an easy secretarial course, which will not interfere with them and their parents expectations and plan for marriage and family life. The relative failure rate for all pupils at

Table 5. Number of pupils by type of education, class and sex.

Type of Education		Class							All Classe
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
General	Total	9,610	8,850	7,572	195	166	134	92	26,619
	Male	4,992	4,576	3,886	131	95	73	55	13,808
	Female	4,618	4,274	3,686	64	71	61	37	12,811
Classical	Total	-	-	-	973	885	1,250	34	3,142
	Male	-	-	-	316	292	345	14	967
	Female	-	-	-	657	593	905	20	2,175
Commercial	Total	-	-	-	1,982	1,717	2,416	43	6,158
	Male	-	-	-	575	497	819	24	1,925
	Female	-	-	-	1,397	1,220	1,597	19	4,233
Science	Total	-	-	-	1,479	1,338	1,563	47	4,427
	Male	-	-	-	892	803	925	44	2,754
	Female	-	-	-	497	535	638	3	1,673
Technical	Total	-	-	-	279	289	378	-	946
	Male	-	-	-	260	268	337	-	865
	Female	-	-	-	19	21	41	-	81
Vocational	Total	-	-	-	1,398	1,005	754	32	3,189
	Male	-	-	-	1,097	912	729	32	2,770
	Female	-	-	-	301	93	25	-	419
L.E.M.	Total	-	-	-	2,035	1,812	469	-	4,316
	Male	-	-	-	875	793	297	-	1,965
	Female	-	-	-	1,170	1,019	172	-	2,351
All Types of Education	Total	9,610	8,850	7,572	8,341	7,212	6,964	248	48,793
	Male	4,992	4,576	3,886	4,246	3,660	3,525	169	25,054
	Female	4,618	4,274	3,686	4,095	3,552	3,439	79	23,743

### Refugee pupils in the South in Primary and Secondary Education.

Between 1974 and 1980 the Ministry of Education had to face extra constraints with the influx of refugee pupils from occupied areas to the south. At the primary level, as table shows, 15,566 pupils were facing special emotional and socio-economic problems because of their refugee status. Financial, psychological and emotional problems as well as imposing an enormous additional strain on existing resources which affected all pupils and teachers alike. At the secondary level the numbers of refugee pupils was comparable 15,138 i.e. 31.0% of the total secondary school population.

Table 6 , Refugee pupils in the south (1979-1980)  
Primary Education  
Enrolment of refugee pupils by district

District	Pupils		
	Urban	Rural	Urban and Rural
Nicosia	3,945	2,263	6,208
Kyrenia	-	-	-
Larnaca	1,851	1,729	3,580
Pamagusta	-	912	912
Limassol	2,614	1,523	4,137
Paphos	394	335	729
TOTAL	8,804	6,762	15,566

### 4. The Tertiary Sector.

Education at the tertiary level as defined by Unesco, covers institutions which require as a minimum condition of admission the successful completion of education at the secondary level of knowledge. Tertiary education in Cyprus is provided for less than 10% of the Cypriot school-leavers in six public institutions which are:

The Pedagogical Academy. This is a teacher training college and comes under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. It offers a free

three-year course for the training of nursery and primary school teachers. Besides the free course, students are also offered an allowance of about £90 per month for the 10 months of the academic year. Exams are a prerequisite for entering the Academy and there is fierce competition, especially among females, who have fewer opportunities to study abroad; the whole of Cypriot society regards teacher training as a very respectable

alternative. The number of males and females entering the college as students is set by the Council of Ministers in order to achieve a sex balance of teachers in schools.

The Higher Technical Institute (ATI) comes under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. It was set up in 1968 in order to provide industry with qualified technicians and teachers for the Technical schools. All candidates sit an entrance examination before entering the institute. It offers a 3 year course in Mechanical, Electrical, Civil and Marine Engineering. Male students here outnumber females four to one.

The Forestry College comes under the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. This college was established in 1951.

The school of Nursing and Midwifery comes under the Ministry of Health. It is situated in the grounds of the Nicosia hospital and offers the following courses: (a) a 3 year course for the certificate of General Registered Nurses; (b) a 2 year course for Assistance Nurses and (c) a 2 year course in midwifery. This school is recognised abroad, e.g. U.K.

The Hotel and Catering Institute which was set up in 1969-70 provides training in Cookery, Waiting, Housekeeping and Reception at the Middle level.

The Psychiatric school of Nursing is situated in the grounds of the psychiatric Hospital and offers a 2 year course. The following tables give more detail about sex differentiation in these schools with obvious implications for the social values that influence males and females in choosing the relevant institutions.

There are also five private institutions at the third level which offer courses. All of them function on a full-time basis but some also offer part-time courses. The duration of the courses ranges from 2 to 3 years and in most cases examinations are associated with academic institutions overseas.

-714-

Table 7. (c) Graduates of 1978-79 by institution and sex.

Name of Institution	Male	Female	Both Sexes
English Tutorial Centre	-	52	52
Philips College	-	-	-
College of Arts and Science	32	9	41
Higher College of Technology	32	1	33
Cyprus College	14	-	14
ALL INSTITUTIONS	78	62	140

#### 5. Other educational programmes: Evening schools

a) The first secondary evening school started in 1970-71 in Nicosia and the second in Limassol in 1975-76. Their main purpose is to offer secondary education to young working adults. The fees are very low - £20 per year and £2 enrolment. The total number of students in the Nicosia evening school in 1977-78 was 207, out of which only 41 were women. This discrepancy can be explained by the likelihood that if a girl of 15 had discontinued her education because of certain social expectations, the same set of ideas will preclude going to evening classes. She has been prepared for marriage, housework or paid work that does not need a secondary school certificate. On the contrary, a boy of a similar socio-economic class e.g. a boy from a working class background who was forced to stop looks forward to further education for career advancement. There is still hope for him to make up for his disadvantage in being born working class. As far as young rural women who stopped their secondary education is concerned, there is almost no chance that they will be allowed to go to the town at night for education since the general belief is that they must not risk their honour, or name by any means; they do not need education since they will soon marry and have children. Examples of just this restriction are given in chapter 8 below.

b) Evening Technical classes. Alongside to general evening secondary schools there are a few evening technical classes. In 1977-78 out of 1231 students only 125 were women and these were only involved in Jewellery, Art and Sewing.

#### 6. University and College Education Abroad.

Cyprus ranks third in the whole world in terms of the percentage of the population in receipt of third level education. Cyprus itself has no university. Recent statistics show that 47.3% of the total secondary school leavers in 1976 continued their studies. Total expenditure on students abroad shows a steady increase. In 1970-71, it was £2 million, in 1974-75 it became £4.6 million and in 1975-76 it reached £5 million. This is about 1.5% of the gross national product. In 1975-76 there were 11,770 Cypriots studying abroad, enrolled in 1,000 educational institutions in 30 countries and following well over a hundred subjects.

Of the total of 11,770 students abroad in 1978, 7223 (i.e. 61.4%) were studying in Greece, while 2,349 (i.e. 20%) were in the United Kingdom. A considerable number (that is 6.8%) were studying in other Western-European countries while 906 or 7.7% were studying in Socialist countries. Although the United States and Canada involve problems of both distance and expenditure of Cypriot students, nonetheless 2.9% were studying there. The following table shows the five most popular fields of study:

Table 8 (a) Popular fields of study.

1. Humanities	1,692
2. Commercial and Business Studies	1,629
3. Medical and Paramedical	1,517
4. Engineering and Technology	1,442
5. Law	1,199

Table 9 (b) Distribution of students by level of education.

1. Postgraduate	395
2. Undergraduates	1,315
3. Higher Non University	1,315
4. Middle Vocational	319
5. Preparatory	757

Source: Statistics in Education. 1980.

ABBREVIATIONS

PEO- GREEK CAPITALS FOR PANCYPRIOT UNION OF WORKERS

DHKO- THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ( THE PARTY OF THE CENTRE)

DHSY- DEMOCRATIKOS SYNAGERMOS (THE RIGHT WING PARTY)

AKEL- PROGRESSIVE PARTY OF WORKERS (THE COMMUNIST PARTY)

PODG- PANCYPRIOT ORGANISATION OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN

EKA- UNION OF CYPRIOT AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

PEK- PANRURAL UNION OF CYPRIOTS

SEK- FEDERATION OF CYPRIOT WORKERS -RIGHT WING

POED- PANCYPRIOT ORGANIZATION OF GREEK TEACHERS(PRIMARY)

OELMEK- ORGANIZATION OF GREEK TEACHERS OF SECONDARY  
EDUCATION

PASYDY- PANCYPRIOT FEDERATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS  
ASSOCIATIONS

A.CY.W.S.- ASSOCIATION OF CYPRIOT WOMEN SCIENTISTS

E.R & E.D.-ASSOCIATION FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL DUTIES

PASYDY-Pancypriot association of civil servants

Total of members in 1980- 11.904

Male members - 7.706

Female members - 4.198

Percentage of women - 35.3%

Women in important positions in the association.

One woman was represented in the 45 members executive committee. This is the highest body after the general assembly of representatives, which takes place once a year where all branches are represented according to the numbers of members in their branches.

PASYDY has in all 75 branches. Officers are the president and the secretary. From a total of 150 officers only 13 are women, a percentage of 8.6 %

PASYDY has a special branch for women members of which all are female members of the organization. This branch is not involved with union general issues, since these as the secretary said, are dealt with by the association. The women's branch deals with maternity leaves, post natal and antenatal issues.















APPENDICES FOR CHAPTER 8

Notes sent to prospective participants, those urban women who had secondary plus education .

A RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE POSITION OF GREEK CYPRIOT WOMEN IN CYPRUS TODAY

I am currently engaged in studying the life of Greek Cypriot women, that is their position in the Cypriot society vis a vis Greek Cypriot men, and I am using the methodological techniques of in depth interviews and participant observation. I hope that you may be able to help me by participating in this study. The purpose for sending you these notes is to give you some details about my research and especially what I have done until now and what would be asked of you if you were to participate. I am sure that I can discuss this research further on the phone or during our first contact if you were to participate and if there are any questions in your mind about it.

You already know something about myself through our mutual friend ..... who suggested your name to me, about my life history and my interests in the particular field that I am studying. This present research forms a major part of my educational aspirations towards a University of London postgraduate degree. I am researching into certain aspects of Greek Cypriot

women's lives and along with other basic demographic data I am gathering information about a woman's upbringing, socialization, formal and informal education, aspirations about a career or family life, involvement in public life, commitment to familial traditional roles, views on sex and marriage and, finally, experiences of paid and unpaid work.

What would be involved in participating in this research? First of all it involves participation in an interview which may last between 1 1/2 to 2 hours, either in your house or in any other place in Nicosia which might be convenient for you. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and I want to stress stressing that I would like you to feel free to ask any questions that might worry you concerning the confidentiality of the interview. I would very much like to tape record the session in order to make good use of our discussion later on when I will gather together all the data. At the beginning we will get to know each other; I will ask you some background information and you have every right to ask me anything you want about my life now and my historical background. I would hope that you would find the interview an enjoyable experience and that you might see this as an opportunity to reflect on 'where you are at now', your feelings or thoughts about issues that will be raised at the interview

I will be happy if you will look forward to the participation in my research as an interesting experience and you will want to take part in it.

-----

Letter sent to 26 Poli women in October 1979 along with the accompanying details in order to prepare the sample for my fieldwork in the Urban setting.

Maria Roussou  
33 Mattison Rd  
London N.4  
Oct. 1979

Dear H.....

.....  
.....(personal )

I hope to spend a few more months in Cyprus very soon to continue my fieldwork on the research topic that you already know. Study A - the wives of missing persons - has now been analysed and I am expanding my topic to include interviews with about 100 rural and 100 urban women of all possible marital statuses: married, separated, divorced, unmarried and widowed. I would be very grateful to you if you could take part in this



fieldwork, having in mind that confidentiality is my primary concern. The names of all participants will be disguised and the two settings already chosen will given the names Horio and Poli. The analysis of the data will give special consideration to emphasising the commonalities and differences of the experiences of Cypriot women. This letter and the information papers enclosed have been sent to 26 of the Poli women I know. Some of them are amongst our mutual friends, some are women that friends suggested. If you want to discuss your possible participation please contact D..... and M....., to answer some of your questions, if you have any, before committing yourself. Please feel free to say no if you feel so. I would appreciate it very much if you could let me know about your intention in participating in this study before Christmas so that I can sort out the numbers to be involved.

Sorry for asking so much. I thought that in your work or social circle you might know of a few other women who might be interested in participating; please give them the information leaflet with my address on and hopefully they will contact me if they are interested.

Yours,

M.... R.....

-----

Urban sample :

Possible distribution of ages: 15-75

	%
Possible distribution of social classes 10-15	(1)
20-25	(2)
20-25	(3)
20-25	(4)
10-15	(5)

Refugee women .....about 25 %

Marital status.....single: 10-15 %  
married: 40-60 %  
divorced:15-20 %  
widows: 5-10 %

MAIN POINTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH URBAN WOMEN

A. BACKGROUND DATA

1. Place of birth and early childhood: Rural (R)  
Urban (U)

2. Place of adolescent years and adult life before  
the 1974 war: Rural (R)  
Urban (U)

3. Age at the time of Interview:.....

4. Education: Illiterate  
Half Primary only  
Full primary only  
Full secondary only  
Further education only  
University or Higher Prof. training

5. Marital status: Married  
Single\*  
Not yet married  
Separated/ Divorced  
Widows

6. Work: Housewife  
Full-time waged work || What kind of  
Part-time waged work || work ?  
Assistant to family business

7. Social class position : of her Father  
of her husband  
of any other relative who  
might be a possible dowerer

8. Which social class position did she think she occupied?

1. Upper professional, property owners, trading and commercial, Europe educated.
2. Lower middle classes, secondary school teachers and civil servants.
3. Small traders, shopkeepers and skilled workers.
4. Workers, urban based or commuters to the town on monthly or weekly contracts
5. Peasant landholders, shepherds and agricultural workers

9. Background data from family of origin: number and order of children, males and females:

Discriminatory attitudes of the mother towards girls/boys?

Discriminatory attitudes of the father towards girls/boys?

Housework during adolescence

Homework from school?

Freedom of movement outside school territory

Relationship between parents: respect

battering

indifference

fear/ honesty

Contact with the church: during adolescence

.... adulthood

Presence of grandparents: living with family

influencing parents

10. Concerning engagement:

love match

arranged 'marriage'

long/short negotiations

discussions about dowry in her presence?

signing of agreement

other important experiences during  
engagement

any discussion about virginity?

previous experiences, if any, known to  
the partner to be?

11. Marriage: bride built house | families'

groom built house | involvement

bride and groom together built it with  
a loan

husband takes over immovable property

the importance of dowry in their early

start as an independent household

first motherhood experiences

(if applicable)

work and married life... (if applicable)

B. HER LIFE IN THE LAST FEW YEARS (5-10 years)

1. Relationship with male authority figure in her life:

Husband: love and devotion towards him?

..... from ...

Sharing decision making

'sharing' housework

sharing each other's problems at work

sharing children's problems

sharing hobbies and outings

any bad habits:gambling

drinking

outing with friends

other women

politics

football maniac

union activist

coffee shop small talk

sexual relations

battering

consumption: use of the car

smoking

drinking

clothes

Father: respect and love

fear

indifference

strict but thoughtful

caring

hardworking

responsible for her financial situation

2. Relationship with children (if applicable):

amicable

caring but tired

strict with girls

cannot deal with boys

help in housework

3. Gets pleasure out of: husband's company

colleagues at work

children

relatives' company

work itself

housework

social life

reading

charity work

women friends

women's groups

cultural activities

4. Source of pain and hardships:

health problems

children's problems

husband's behaviour towards her

towards the children

..... her family of origin

financial difficulties

relationship with inlaws

5. Any other comments/ points for discussion.





MORE BACKGROUND DATA FOR SUBSAMPLE C

URBAN WOMEN: MARRIED: 64  
 SINGLE: 20  
 DIVORCED: 14

CODE NO	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	NO OF CHIL. BY SEX		EDUCATION CATEGORIES *
			M	F	
U. 1	29	M	1	/ 1	6
U. 2	32	M	1	/ 1	6
U. 3	33	M		/ 2	6
UR 4	35	M	1	/ 1	6
UR 5	30	M	none		6+
U. 6	31	M	1	/ 1	5+
UR 7	38	M	1	/ 3	3
U. 8	42	M	1	/ 1	3
U. 9	48	M		/ 4	5
UR 10	43	M	none		6
UR 11	37	M	1	/ 2	5
U. 12	28	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 13	35	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 14	39	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 15	36	M	none		5
U. 16	29	M	2	/	5
U. 17	42	M		/ 2	5
UR 18	33	M		/ 1	5
U. 19	30	M	2	/ (adopted	4
U. 20	35	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 21	41	M		/ 2	4
U. 22	42	M		/ 4	4
U. 23	30	M	2	/	5
U. 24	26	M	2	/ 1	5
UR 25	33	M	1	/ 2	5
U. 26	45	M	1	/ 2	3
UR 27	43	M		/ 2	5
UR 28	64	M	1	/ 3	2
UR 29	46	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 30	60	M	1	/ 2	5
U. 31	52	M		/ 3	6
U. 32	52	M	2	/	6
U. 33	54	M		/ 2	3
U. 34	49	M	1	/ 1	4
U. 35	53	M	2	/ 1	3
U. 36	29	M		/ 1	5
U. 37	26	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 38	27	M	2	/	5
U. 39	25	M	1	/	4
UR 40	38	M		/ 2	3
U. 41	36	M	1	/ 1	5
U. 42	37	M	2	/	4
U. 43	47	M	2	/	4
U. 44	34	M	none		6+
U. 45	28	M		/ 1	6

CODE NO	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	NO OF CHIL. BY SEX M F	EDUCATION CATEGORIES *
U. 46	29	M	1 /	6
U. 47	23	M	none	5
UR 48	37	M	/ 2	6
U. 49	38	M	1 / 1	6
U. 50	50	M	3 / 5	2
U. 51	54	M	/ 3	2
U. 52	24	M	1 /	4
U. 53	19	M	none	3
U. 54	41	M	1 / 1	3
U. 55	55	M	2 /	4
U. 56	57	M	1 / 1	6
UR 57	64	M	/ 1	3
U. 58	59	M	2 /	5
U. 59	29	M	1 / 1	6
U. 60	31	M	1 / 1	4
U. 61	27	M	2 /	5
U. 62	24	M	/ 1	6
UR 63	38	M	3 /	5
U. 64	59	M	3 / 1	2
			+2 /stepch.	
UR 65	30	S		6+
U. 66	31	S		6
U. 67	26	S		6
U. 68	26	S		6
U. 69	31	S		6+
U. 70	32	S		6
UR 71	33	S		4
U. 72	24	S		4
U. 73	29	S		4
UR 74	31	S		5
U. 75	30	S		4
U. 76	28	S		5
U. 77	28	S		5
U. 78	23	S		4
UR 79	28	S		4
UR 80	40	S		5
U. 81	30	S		6
U. 82	26	S		4
U. 83	19	S		4
UR 84	49	S		5

CODE NO	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	NO OF CHIL. BY SEX		EDUCATION CATEGORIES *
			M	F	
U. 85	31	D	1	/	5
U. 86	35	D	1	/	5
U. 87	33	D		/ 1	6
U. 88	31	D		/ 1	6
U. 89	41	D	none		6
U. 90	28	D	none		5
U. 91	31	D		/ 1	6
UR 92	38	D	1	/	5
U. 93	37	D		/ 1	6
U. 94	27	D	none		5
U. 95	31	D	1	/ 1	6+
U. 96	32	D	none		6+
U. 97	33	D	none		5
U. 98	51	D		/ 1	4

\* The education categories range from 1 to 6. Category 1, as with subsamples A and B, includes illiterate women, and 6 those with postgraduate degrees.

UR is the code used for urban refugee women.







Main points from an interview with the supervisor of  
social workers responsible for WMPNs  
August 21st, 1979.

1. Some facts:

1496 families have at least one MPn

365 MPns are parents of young children ( minors)

319 MPns are parents of adult children

792 MPns are young unmarried people

Families of Mpns under the care of the Social  
Services: 365 families

-----

226 with children under 18

98 without minor children

64 families - old parents who lost their  
son

There are cases where father and son are missing from  
the same family.

According to the interviewed supervisor the social  
worker visits these families once a month. Her/his  
job is to comfort them by talking to them, giving  
advice and guidance to problematic children. There are  
cases where the mothers are so overwhelmed by grief  
that they become incapable of looking after their  
children. The social worker also helps and directs on  
how to use any other govermental services.



The Supervisor has to supervise and co-ordinate the work done by all social workers and to intervene in serious cases where 'the broken family' hasn't got any contact or communication between its nuclear members and the extended family or where psychosomatic illness becomes very serious. E.g. Contacts with the Psychiatric department of the General Hospital of Nicosia.

In many cases the WMPns, because they live in a limbo situation, they are continuously expecting their husbands to come back and do not get involved in a 'meaningful secure job; we advise them to contact and work with the department of Crafts and Designs'.

THE INTERVIEW WAS CUT SHORT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS SCHEDULED TO GO FOR TWO HOURS. THE SUPERVISOR MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE COULDN'T ANSWER MANY QUESTIONS ON THE SUBJECT 'NOW THAT SHE THOUGHT ABOUT IT MORE'

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